

HIGGIN'S
ON THE ABUSES AT THE
YORK
LUNATIC ASYLUM.
PART II.

19.16.61

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EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE A

COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

RESPECTING THE

ASYLUM AT YORK;

WITH

OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

AND A

LETTER TO THE COMMITTEE,



&c. &c. &c.

BY GODFREY HIGGINS, Esq.

DONCASTER:

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1816.

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LATELY PUBLISHED,

A LETTER to Earl FITZWILLIAM, respecting the ABUSES
in the YORK ASYLUM;

By GODFREY HIGGINS, Esq.

To be had of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-row ;
F. C. and J. Rivington, St. Paul's Church-yard, London ; W. Sheardown, High-
street, Doncaster ; and Todd, York.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

Taken before the SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to consider of Provisions being made for the better Regulation of MADHOUSES in *England*.

Lunæ 1° die Maii, 1815.

The Right Honourable GEORGE ROSE, in the Chair.

Godfrey Higgins, Esquire, called in, and examined.

WHERE do you live?—At Skellow Grange, near Doncaster, in Yorkshire.

You are a Governor of the York Asylum, and a Magistrate of the West-Riding of Yorkshire?—I am.

Have you any knowledge of the state and condition of the York Lunatic Asylum, and the method of treatment of the patients in that Asylum?—I have.

Have the goodness to state to the Committee, how you became possessed of that information?—In the year 1813, application was made to me to grant a warrant against a man who had assaulted a poor woman; upon inquiry I found the man to be insane, and ordered him to be sent to the Asylum, at York: sometime afterwards he returned, and I was informed he had been extremely ill used; (the name of the man was William Vickers;) in consequence of this, I published several letters and other documents, upon which various meetings of the Governors were held from time to time for the course of twelve months, until the 27th of August last; upon which day all the servants and officers of the house were dismissed, or their places declared vacant, except one. Not being perfectly satisfied with what was done, I thought it incumbent upon me to publish a letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, as Lord Lieutenant of that Riding; in which, to the best of my knowledge, I stated every thing that I knew relating to the Institution and to the abuses which had taken place in that house. The Appendix contains a report of the Committee appointed to investigate the abuses, and the new Rules and Regulations.

[*A Copy of this Pamphlet was laid upon the Table of the Committee.*]

In what condition did you find the Asylum when you visited it in the Spring Assize week of 1814?—Having suspicions in my mind that there were some parts of that Asylum which had not been seen, I went early in the morning, determined to examine

every place; after ordering a great number of doors to be opened, I came to one which was in a retired situation in the kitchen apartments, and which was almost hid by the opening of a door in the passage; I ordered this door to be opened; the keepers hesitated, and said, the apartment belonged to the women, and they had not the key; I ordered them to get the key, but it was said to be mislaid, and not to be found at the moment; upon this I grew angry, and told them, I insisted upon its being found, and that if they would not find it, I could find a key at the kitchen fire-side, namely, the poker; upon that the key was immediately brought. When the door was opened, I went into the passage, and I found four cells, I think, of about eight feet square, in a very horrid and filthy situation, the straw appeared to be almost saturated with urine and excrement; there was some bedding laid upon the straw in one cell, in the others only loose straw; a man (a keeper) was in the passage doing something, but what I do not know; the walls were daubed with excrement; the air holes, of which there were one in each cell, were partly filled with it; in one cell there were two pewter chamber-pots loose. I asked the keeper if these cells were inhabited by the patients? and was told they were at night. I then desired him to take me up stairs, and shew me the place of the women who came out of those cells that morning; I then went up stairs, and he shewed me into a room, which I caused him to measure, and the size of which he told me was twelve feet by seven feet ten inches, and in which there were thirteen women, who he told me had all come out of those cells that morning.

Were they pauper women?—I do not know; I was afraid that afterwards he should deny that, and therefore I went in and said to him, “Now, Sir, clap your hand upon the head of this woman,” and I did so too; and I said, “Is this one of the very women that were in those cells last night,” and he said she was; I became very sick, and could not remain longer in the room, I vomitted. In the course of an hour and a half after this, I procured Colonel Cooke, of Owston, and John Cooke, Esq. of Campsmount, to examine those cells; they had come to attend a special meeting which I had caused to be called that day at twelve o’clock; whilst I was standing at the door of the cells waiting for the key, a young woman ran past me, amongst the men servants, decently dressed; I asked who she was, and was told by Atkinson, that she was a female patient of respectable connections. At a special meeting of the Governors which I had caused to be called, I told them what I had seen, and I asked Atkinson the Apothecary, in their presence, if what I had said was not correctly true; and I told him, if he intended to deny

any part of it, he must do it then; he bowed his assent, and acknowledged what I said was true. I then desired the Governors to come with me to see those cells; and then I discovered, for the first time, that the cells were unknown to the Governors; several of the committee, which consisted of fifteen, told me they had never seen them, that they had gone round the house with his Grace the Archbishop of York, that they had understood they were to see the whole house, and these cells had not been shewn to them. We went through the cells, and at that time they had been cleaned as much as they could in so short a space of time. I turned up the straw in one of them with my umbrella, and pointed out to the gentlemen the chain and handcuff which were then concealed beneath the straw, and which I then perceived had been fixed into a board newly put down in the floor. I afterwards inquired of one of the committee of five, who had been appointed to afford any temporary accommodations which they could for a moderate sum of money to the patients, if those cells had been shewn to that committee, and I was told they had not. Before I saw these cells, I had been repeatedly told by Atkinson the Apothecary, and the Keepers, that I had seen the whole house that was occupied by patients; I afterwards was told by a professional man, Mr. Pritchett, that he had heard Mr. Watson, the Architect, ask one of the Keepers what those places were; Mr. Watson at that time was looking out of the staircase window, and he heard the Keeper answer Mr. Watson, that they were cellars and other little offices: the day after my examination of these cells, I went again early in the morning to examine them, after I knew that the straw could have been used only one night; and I can positively say, from this examination, that the straw which I first found there, must have been in use a very considerable time. Early in the investigation which took place into this Institution, several gentlemen came forward to state that they had examined the house on purpose to form a judgment of it, but though several of them were present when I stated the case of these cells, they did not state that they had seen them. When Colonel Cooke, of Owston, was in one of the cells, he tried to make marks or letters in the excrement remaining on the floor after it had been cleaned, and fresh straw put into it, which he did without any difficulty, and which he will be ready to state to the committee if required. The day after I saw these cells, I went up into the apartments of the upper class of female patients, with one of the men Keepers as I should suppose, about thirty years of age, one of those who were dismissed in August; and I asked him, when at the door of the ward, if his key would not open those doors; I did not give him time to answer, but I seized the key from his hand, and with it opened the outer door of the

ward, and then went and opened the bed-room doors of the upper class of female patients, and locked them again; I then gave him his key again: Mr. Samuel Tuke, a Quaker, of York, was standing by and saw me.

Do you know of any unfit practices with respect to the female patients?—Yes; I have been informed they have been got with child; and I have now in my hand a copy of a warrant granted by Frederick L'Oste, of the county of Lincoln, to apprehend James Backhouse, the head keeper, who was charged with having got with child Elizabeth West, a female pauper, sent to this Asylum, by the Overseers of the Poor of the Township of Louth; the warrant appears to have been backed on the 17th of June, 1797, by R. Metcalfe. I am informed that he was taken by the authority of this warrant, to Louth, where Elizabeth West fathered the child upon him. Elizabeth West was admitted into the Asylum, August the 17th, 1796, was removed, May the 8th, 1797, and was delivered of a male child August the 19th, 1797; the Keeper, Backhouse, paid £30. to the Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Louth, for the maintenance of the bastard; he paid it in three instalments; it appears by the town books, that the Overseers of the Poor have made themselves debtors in these sums to the township; I am informed that Elizabeth West was a young woman of exceedingly good character before she went to the Asylum; and she is now a woman of exceedingly good character, and has been living some years in a respectable family. Sometime after this the head keeper retired from this house, upon which occasion a piece of plate was voted to him as a mark of approbation of his conduct during a service of twenty-six years; I have not the most distant suspicion, that any one of the Governors who voted for this piece of plate, had any knowledge whatever of this transaction between Backhouse and West, except the Physician Hunter.

In what line of life is Backhouse at present?—He now keeps a private Madhouse, in York.

Do you know of any case more recent, of the same nature?—Yes; the case of Dorothy Exilby, of Kirby Malzeard; she was admitted February 8th, 1801, she was discharged cured, Feb. 20th, 1802, delivered of a male child the 21st September, 1802; the father of this child is said to have been one of the patients. I have heard also, and believe from the respectable authority from which I received it, that a woman in a superior situation in life who was there as an insane patient, was got with child by some person within the house.

Do you know whether, amongst the women whom you found as inhabitants of the cells, you have described as having been

concealed, there were persons of a better situation of life than pauper lunatics?—I think there were not at that time.

Have you reason to believe that women of that better situation of life, had ever been confined there?—I have not.

Do you know of any cases of cruelty or unnecessary severity having been exercised in that Asylum?—I conceive the case of William Vickers must have been a case both of cruelty and of very great neglect. When I examined him, which I did very soon after I was told he had returned from York, his body appeared to be bruised in many parts; I was informed he had a bad sore on his leg, and I refused to order the Overseer of the Poor to give him relief, until he had procured for my satisfaction the certificate of Mr. Maples, a Surgeon, of Thorne, (who attended the poor people of the parish,) as to his state of health; of which the following is a copy:—

“This is to certify, That I was sent for by Mr. Hopwood, of Thorning Hurst, on Thursday the 14th instant, to examine the state in which William Vickers, of Stainforth, was dismissed from the York Asylum. He had the itch very bad, was also extremely filthily, for I saw his wife not only comb several lice from his head, but take them from the folds of his shirt neck; his health was so much impaired, that he was not able to stand by himself; his legs were very much swelled, and one of them in a state of mortification. He is now much recovered both in mind and health, by bark and a generous nourishing diet. Witness my hand, this 29th day of October, 1813. *Charles Maples.*”

Upon that certificate being sent to me, I ordered him relief, and I began to make inquiries of his relations and friends, into all the circumstances which had taken place respecting him, and I have no doubt, that if the eight or nine disinterested witnesses had been examined by the Governors, this case would have been completely made out; several of the witnesses told me, from the appearance of his back when he first came from York, that he had been flogged; he repeatedly told them so when in the Asylum; and at one time, when one or two of the witnesses were present with him in the Asylum, a woman was brought from the other part of the Asylum, and she told them that she was flogged also. When I saw Vickers, the black marks remained very strong, but the marks of the whip lashes, which they described, had disappeared. Vickers, at the time I saw him, was in such a state of health, that he could not give an intelligent answer to any question whatever, although he walked about and ate his victuals heartily. Another case which I laid before the Governors, was that of the Rev. Mr. Skorey; he was

a clergyman, reduced to indigence I believe in consequence of his mental complaint; he had at times, and for considerable periods, intervals of reason; in those intervals, when he was perfectly capable of understanding every thing that was done to him, repeatedly in the presence of his wife, he was exposed to personal indignity; and on one occasion he was inhumanly kicked down stairs by the keepers, and told, in the presence of his wife, that he was looked upon no better than a dog; his person swarmed with vermin: and to complete this poor man's misery, the keepers insulted his wife with indecent ribaldry, in order to deter her from visiting him in his unfortunate situation; his wife occasionally visited him, to bring him such little comforts as she could procure by the labour of her hands, for she worked to support him during the time that he was in the Asylum; he had a gold watch, which was lost there, and which his wife could never recover.

How long ago was this case?—I should think not more than three years ago.

Do you know any thing of the cases of two persons of the name of Thirkell?—Yes.

Were they relations?—Yes.

Have the goodness to state to the Committee, what you know about them?—One of them a labouring man, was sent to the Asylum on the recommendation of Miss Place, of York; after some time he disappeared, and has never been heard of from that time to this.

In what way was his disappearance entered in the books?—He was entered "removed;" when Miss Place called to inquire after his state of health, as she told me, she asked Atkinson, the Apothecary, how he did, and Atkinson said, he was gone away well. I have asked the father of this young man, if he knew whether hand-bills were published, or any means taken to discover him; he said, he never heard of any, and he never could get a sight of a hand-bill.

Did Atkinson, or any one belonging to the Asylum, say, that hand-bills were issued offering a reward for his discovery?—Yes, the steward said so; and on the day when I discovered the concealed cells, I asked Mr. Surr, the steward, to produce to me the printer's bill for that quarter of the year in which the hand-bill must have been entered, if any had been printed by the printer of the Asylum, and he told me, after a long search, that he had lost the bill.

How long ago is this?—About two years ago. The other Thirkell was a relation of the former, and came from Sherburn, in Yorkshire, and was killed some time after he was in the Asylum, by another patient; his death was entered in the book

of the Institution, where the accounts are kept of what becomes of the patients, under the word "died." Upon my examining Mr. Surr at the meeting in August, as to the mode in which the casualties were entered, he acknowledged that they were all entered in the same way; but in the case of Thirkell, a coroner's inquest did sit, and the verdict of the jury was entered in the order book, which was a book kept locked up for the use of the Governors. When a man of the name of Bardwell, alias Chappy, was killed a little after this, and who was endeavoured to be buried privately, and without a coroner's inquest, his death was also entered "died;" but the Rev. Mr. Graham having heard that he had been killed, would not bury him, but insisted upon a coroner's jury being summoned; and the verdict of the jury was, "that he had died by the violence of three other of the patients."

Have you any reason to doubt that the fact was as found by the coroner's jury?—Certainly not; I never meant to attach blame in the case of Thirkell, who was killed, and I only named him in my information to the Governors to clearly distinguish his case from that of the Thirkell who had disappeared, for at that time I did not know the christian names of the two.

Do you know whether any book or books are kept, so as to ascertain with accuracy the number of patients admitted, and how they are disposed of, whether by cure, or by death, or escapes, or in any other way?—There was a set of books regularly kept by the apothecary, and also another set by the steward, both of which purported to be a correct account of the admissions of the patients, and how they were disposed of, but I have reason to believe that those accounts were false, and that they were kept falsely on purpose. By the report of the committee of investigation, it appears that the patients admitted from the opening of the Institution up to the 1st of July, 1813, had been 2,560, and that the deaths during that period had been 365; but it appears that a publication of the state of the Asylum, signed by Mr. Atkinson, the Apothecary, was made in the York Herald, August, 1812, and another in August, 1813; which are as follow :—

"Extract from the York Herald, August, 1812.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Admitted from the first Estab- | Discharged cured | 1,112 |
| lishment, in the year 1777, | Ditto relieved..... | 612 |
| to June 30th, 1811 | Ditto incurable | 312 |
| 2 346 | Died | 210 |
| Present year | Remain | 195 |
| 99 | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2,445 | | 2,445 |
| <hr/> | | <hr/> |

The Accounts kept by the apothecary and the steward were Debtor and Creditor Accounts; and as it appears, from a comparison of the Report of the Committee and the extracts from the *York Herald*, that the deaths of 144 patients had actually been concealed, they must have been concealed from design, because the account is a debtor and creditor account, and if the account was false in one place, it must have been false in more places than one, or else the sum totals could not have agreed; therefore as this arises upon debtor and creditor accounts kept by two men, and they both agreed, and both were false, it must necessarily be a falsification by quadruple entry, not double entry only. I asked the apothecary, who made out these accounts; and he told me, that he did, but that it was his practice to send them to the physician and to the steward for examination, previous to their publication.

Do you know what has become of the books of the Institution?—Yes; the committee for the management of the Institution, about last Christmas, sent to the steward, to desire him to send them his books of accounts. He told them, he would not do it, for the books were his, and he would not give them up. They reported this at a quarterly court, upon which Mr. Brook the treasurer, was sent to demand them; when he told Mr. Brook, that, in a moment of irritation, he had burned them all except a single quarterly account, namely, that for the last quarter of 1814, which he delivered up. A few days afterwards, the steward produced a set of quarterly books for the last sixteen years. The books produced were those occasionally inspected by the Governors, and they purported to contain an account of the sums received for the patients. There was, however, another set of books which have not been produced, in which the steward entered his actual receipts; and it was by the comparison of a single quarterly account belonging to this set, which accidentally came into the hands of the Committee of Enquiry, with a quarterly book of corresponding date belonging to the former set, that the physician's participation in the weekly payments of certain classes of patients was discovered. I have, I think, therefore reason to believe that the burning of the books, if it actually took place, was not a sudden sally of passion, but a deliberate act of selection; that information was given to me by Mr. Jonathan Gray, of York, one of the governors, who was present at the time.

Do you know any thing respecting the mortality within the Asylum?—Yes; I believe the average number of patients during Dr. Hunter's life, for 32 years, ending in 1808, was 84; and that the deaths upon the average were eight per annum, or about a tenth of the whole. Since Dr. Hunter's death, the

number of patients has been as follows :—In 1809, 156 ; in 1810, 168 ; in 1811, 168 ; in 1812, 186 ; in 1813, 200 ; in 1814, 173. The average number of patients was 175. The deaths on an average have been 25 in a year, or a seventh of the whole. During the year ending the 1st July, 1814, the number of patients was as follows :—1813 : July, 200 ; August, 198 ; September, 196 ; October, 199 ; November, 188 ; December, 186. —1814 : January, 173 ; February, 160 ; March, 160 ; April, 159 ; May, 139 ; June, 121. The average number for the year, is 173. The deaths were 33, or nearly one-fifth of the whole. There was no death took place from the 14th July, 1814, up to the 3d of February, 1815, nearly seven months. In the former year, exclusive of the four that were said to be burned, there was a mortality of one-sixth of the whole patients, 29 out of 173, whereas during Dr. Hunter's life they did not exceed one-tenth of the whole. The same proportion, *videlicet*, that of 1813-14, would allow 17 deaths during the year ending in July, 1815.

Do you know how many patients have died during the last year, in the Asylum ?—When I inquired last, about a month ago, I was told there had been three.

Do you know the mortality that took place in the Institution called the Retreat, at York, by which the Committee can be made acquainted with the ratio of deaths in the number of patients ?—A greater mortality appears to me to have taken place in the Asylum, than in the Retreat *cæteris paribus*. I beg leave to observe, that the calculation ought always to be made on the average number of patients in the house, and not upon the number admitted in the year. I believe the deaths in the Asylum, in the first thirty-six years, were 365 ; the average number of patients in the Asylum, about 98 ; the deaths in the Retreat, in sixteen years, were 26 ; the average number of patients in the Retreat, 46. I have been informed, that of 82 old cases, stated to be incurable, admitted into the Retreat, 16 were discharged cured. At Saint Luke's only 18 out of 323 incurables were reported cured ; and from Bethlem Hospital but one out of 78 was discharged cured, and that one was returned to the Hospital.

How long is it since the Asylum was burnt :—A few days after the court of Governors at York had ordered a general investigation, by a committee, into the rules and management of the Institution (which was about last January twelve-month) the building was found to be on fire.

Did any investigation take place how it came to be on fire ?—Yes ; a general meeting took place immediately on the spur of the occasion, and a committee of five gentlemen was appointed ;

and they made a report a few weeks afterwards, that they believed four patients had been burnt.

Do you believe more than four people were burnt?—I can hardly state a decisive opinion upon that subject; only it appears by the report of the committee, that several patients had been admitted into the house, of whom no account whatever can be given.

You mean by that, that they are not now existing in the house, and they can produce no proof of their being discharged?—Yes; viz. Margaret Smith, admitted February 17th, 1787; Catherine St. Clair, admitted October 16th, 1790; D. Myson, admitted April 20th, 1796; D. Thackwray, admitted July 20th, 1796; and Mrs. Parke, admitted August 19th, 1797.

At what time of the day or night did the fire break out?—At about eight o'clock in the evening.

Do you know any thing of the use of chains in the house?—Yes, I do; but I never thought or stated it as my opinion, that the use of a chain would have been a charge against the Institution, if it had not been stated by Dr. Best and all the keepers, that to their knowledge there were no chains in the house, and that they were unnecessary.

Did you find any chains in the house?—Yes, I did; I found a chain in one of the cells that was concealed, which certainly did not appear to have been recently used; and I should never have made an observation upon that chain, if it had not, as I have said before, been repeatedly stated by the officers and servants of the Institution, that to their knowledge there was not such a thing in the house.

Did you find, in any other part of the house, chains?—Yes, I did; on the day when all the servants and officers of the house were dismissed, I went to a closet at the side of a fire in one of the cells, and demanded the key of it; we could find all the keys in the house but that, and the carpenter was obliged to open it. In that closet I found an instrument, which I believe is called by Shakespear a gyve; it is a strong iron bar about two feet long, with a shackle at each end, intended to keep open the legs of a patient; it is fastened to an iron belt which goes round the body of the patient, and has two chains to it, and handcuffs for the hands of the patient. I took it directly to the weighing scales, and that part of it which was there, for the chain was wanting, weighed 24lbs. I desired it to be taken care of, in order that the Committee of the House of Commons might see it, if they should be so disposed. It appeared rusty, and not to have been lately used. The keeper could give no account of when it came into the house.

Did you find any where about the house any chains in such a state as to induce you to think the use of them had

been recently required in the house?—No; nor do I believe they had.

Have any new laws been made?—Yes.

Bearing what date?—The new laws were passed last August.

Dr. Best, the Physician, has resigned, has he not?—He has.

So that at this moment there is not an officer belonging to the Institution, who was there during the time the abuses you have been detailing existed?—Yes; there is one, Mr. Brook, the Treasurer, who I believe every body thought had conducted himself with very great honour to himself, and advantage to the Institution; Dr. Best resigned lately, assigning ill health as the cause.

Have you any reason to believe that the food of the patients was bad?—Yes; Mary Beckwith, who was examined in the case of Martha Kidd, one of the cases of abuse I laid before the Governors, told me, that she was faint for want of something to eat, when attending as a witness, and she was ordered some bread and cheese, that the bread was of the vilest and worst description she ever saw in her life. I asked Mr. Ridsdale, a respectable linen-draper, in Pontefract, who was there at that time, if he saw any thing of that bread, and he said he had, and he was ready to make oath of it if necessary, and that it was in his opinion of the worst quality he ever saw in his life; and therefore I think they would have hardly given the witnesses upon such an occasion such bad bread, if they had not fed their patients with it.

Were the servants of the Institution in the practice of taking fees from any of the patients, or of exacting money from them, upon one pretence or another?—A respectable man of the name of Hanson told me, that when he was a patient in the house, he was shut up in a dark cell naked, sometimes with another patient, and sometimes by himself, for a week at a time or more; that he was obliged to obey the calls of nature in a corner of the room; that the straw was not changed for a considerable number of days; and that at one time when he was there, when the keeper brought him his meat, he promised him five shillings when he went out, if he would get him a shirt; and when he did come out and left the Institution, he gave the keeper five shillings according to his promise. I understood this gentleman, that when he gave him the five shillings he was recovered, and on that account, I conceive, he is a credible evidence as to the fact. The physician and apothecary also took fees in one case; a Mr. Mandall, of Doncaster, paid the physician five guineas, upon which occasion Mr. Atkinson also received two, as was stated to me by the relations of the patient who paid them.

What has become of Mr. Atkinson since he was discharged from the Institution?—He has set up a private Madhouse of his own at York.

Do you know that any sums of money have been misapplied?—I have great reason to think there have; and I have stated my reasons at length for that opinion, in my letter to Earl Fitzwilliam.

Do you know an instance of a patient being found out of his proper place?—Yes, I do; one was found by Mr. Samuel Tuke and Mr. Pritchett in the wash-house; it was in the month of April; he was standing on a wet stone floor, apparently in the last stage of decay; he was a mere skeleton, his thighs were covered with excrement in a dry state, and those parts which were not so, appeared excoriated, as did also some parts of his waist. The keeper, who was called, said, that the patient was not accustomed to leave his bed, that he was a perfect child and could do nothing for himself, that his attendant was killing pigs, and could not therefore attend to him; the bed which he was said to have left was in a most filthy state, and corresponded with that of his body; he was spoken of by all the attendants, as a dying man; the further history of this poor creature however, proved the fallacy of appearances; he was removed to another part of the Asylum, where he was better attended to, and in a few months was so much recovered, as to be removed to his parish, in an inoffensive though imbecile state of mind.

Martis, 2^o die Maii, 1815.

The Right Honourable GEORGE ROSE, in the Chair.

Godfrey Higgins, Esquire, again called in, and examined.

IN your examination of yesterday, you stated that it appeared by the Report, that certain patients were missing or unaccounted for; did the Asylum, or the relatives of any of those persons so missed, take any trouble to discover what had become of them?—Not to my knowledge.

You stated yesterday, that a considerable misapplication of the public money had taken place; will you inform the Committee as briefly as you can, how that arose, and to whose use the misapplied money was appropriated?—In the seventh page of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry, it will be seen that a classification took place in the year 1785, and it is therein also admitted, that this order was never repealed. From this it appears, that certain weekly payments were directed; and in page 29, it is stated, that “when any patients of a better condi-

tion offer themselves to the Asylum, they are admitted upon a rate of payment which may be deemed adequate to their circumstances; and that Dr. Hunter, to whom the Governors think themselves obliged, for his liberal, disinterested, and charitable attendance upon the necessitous objects of the charity, may be requested to do justice to his own interest, by receiving from the friends of such patients the reasonable emoluments of his profession:" and that in the same page, it is also stated what the weekly payments of the patients should be, and what items they should discharge; viz. "the weekly payments, discharge, board and lodging, coal, candle, tea, washing and medicines." These orders could not be considered obsolete by the physician, because in 1813, he published a Report, of which the following is a part; and it appears by the order book, that this Report was proposed by himself, and is entered in the book, as follows:—"Resolved, That the Report now produced and submitted to the court by Dr. Best, be adopted, and that the same be printed and distributed;" and it contained the following passages:—"The friends of the patients pay a weekly sum in proportion to their ability, and by this arrangement, the utility of the Institution is extended to the various classes of society, and at the same time, the expences of the indigent are reduced by the payments of the more affluent patients. Parish and other paupers are maintained at the expense of nine shillings a week; the weekly payments of persons in low circumstances, but not absolutely in the condition of paupers, is from 10s. to 15s.; patients in better circumstances, and in the higher stations of life, are charged with moderation according to their respective means. A certain number of patients in very distressed circumstances who pay for their own board, and have no assistance from their parishes, receive the benefit of £35. per annum, (being the interest of the reduction fund) along with the overflowings of the payments of the more affluent patients. The above payments discharge, lodging, board, coal and candle, tea, washing, and medicines; but those patients whose expences exceed 9s. a week, are separately charged for their washing. The physician is required to attend gratis on the paupers, and on those who are maintained at reduced payments; but is authorised to receive from the friends of the more affluent patients the reasonable emoluments of his profession." In the above Report it is stated, that parish and other paupers are maintained at nine shillings a week, and we are given to understand that the physician receives emoluments from the affluent only; yet, from seventeen of the patients maintained at nine shillings, the physician was receiving one shilling per week each. It is stated, the physician "is authorised to receive reasonable emoluments from the affluent." Mr.

| | | |
|---|--------|------|
| Wilson paid one hundred and nine pounds four shillings per annum, of which the physician only accounted for thirty-six pounds eight shillings, retaining the remaining sum of seventy-two pounds sixteen shillings as "his reasonable emolument." | | |
| The thirty-six pounds eight shillings paid to the house was also to leave overflowings to the distressed patients. In page 48 of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry, it will be seen that there were fourteen patients, at 4s. each per week | | |
| | £145 | 12 0 |
| Twelve ditto, at 2s. each per week - - - - - | 62 | 8 0 |
| Seventeen ditto, at 1s. each per week - - - - - | 44 | 4 0 |
| Now, take the first class of patients at 16s. and the part taken from them at 1l. 8s. for Mr. Wilson, of Saviour-Gate paid 2l. 2s. to the Asylum, of which the physician took 1l. 8s. and there will remain for him - - - - - | 252 | 4 0 |
| | 1164 | 16 0 |
| Which, added to the former, makes - - - - - | 1417 | 0 0 |
| This sum, multiplied by five, the number of years Dr. Best has held the situation, gives - - - | | |
| | 7085 | 0 0 |
| And by twenty-three, the time Dr. Hunter might have taken these sums, viz. since the year 1785, gives - - - - - | 39576 | 0 0 |
| | £39576 | 0 0 |

Now give me leave to observe, that this statement is founded part on fact and part on reasoning merely from the facts stated by the committee; but I can prove on unquestionable evidence, that as much as four pounds a week have been paid; and if I cast off for errors in taking too high an average, or in any other part of the account, 20,000l. I apprehend enough will have been shewn to prove, that the physicians had applied to their own use large sums, without any authority.

Was there any committee or visitors who looked after the affairs of the Asylum?—No; the physician had for many years past been the sole physician, sole visitor, and sole committee, and had the whole management of the Institution.

There was no visitation of the Asylum at all by any of the Governors, or the magistrates in the neighbourhood?—I never heard there was any visitation by Governors, except at the quarter days, and the annual day; and the magistrates had no authority whatever.

At these quarterly and annual meetings, did the Governors who visited, examine into the conduct and management of the house?—I never heard that they went over it to examine it at those periods.

There was no duty prescribed to them by the laws?—I do not know of any; they met quarterly to audit the accounts, and to make such orders as they thought proper.

Do you, in point of fact, believe that in that period any personal inspection and examination by the Governors, of the state and condition of the lunatics within the Asylum, took place?—No, I do not.

Do you know whether, shortly previous to the time of your visiting the cells you described yesterday, there had been any quarterly meeting of the Governors?—I think not, but constant meetings had taken place of the committees to inquire into the abuses of the house.

Do you believe the Governors knew of the misapplication of the money, or the general mismanagement of the Asylum?—I conceive the physician, who was one of the Governors, could not be ignorant of it, whether others were or not, I cannot tell, but I am certain a great many of them were ignorant.

Are you acquainted with any other houses in which there is any degree of mismanagement of the Lunatics?—Yes, in a house at Spinkwell, near Bradford, the situation in which I found the Lunatic paupers was most deplorable, one of them was chained to a stone floor, wallowing in his own excrement and filth; another of them bolted fast into a chair, from which he could not move; this house had no licence, and had never been visited regularly by any magistrates, as the woman keeper of it told me, and I only got access to it by threatening her as a magistrate I would punish her, and that I would ruin her by suing for the fine of 500*l*. Mr. Gee, surveyor, of Little Houghton, was present with me when I visited this house.

How many persons were there confined in it?—I do not recollect, certainly, but about seven or eight.

Were all of them ill treated?—No, not all.

Were those persons so chained down, represented to you as particularly violent?—Yes.

Did they appear to you to be so?—No.

What steps did you take in consequence of finding them in such a situation?—I represented it to the magistrates at the Leeds sessions, but nothing was done as we were upon the point of building a new place for our paupers in the Riding; and we were in hopes Mr. Rose's bill would pass, which would regulate all these places.

Do you believe those persons remain in the same situation at present?—I saw them sometime after that, and I think their situation was not mended; the second time I visited the house, three patients were chained in one bed, two were laying lengthwise, and one across the other two. A young man, called

Craven, the son of an auctioneer, at Bradford, was present with me.

You say that house had not been regularly visited by any magistrate, have you reason to believe it had ever been visited at all by any magistrates?—I believe Mr. Lister had visited it once or twice a very little time before I had gone there; but I have named the circumstance of this house to a considerable number of the Justices at Pontefract sessions, and except Mr. Lister I did not find any that knew of it.

No step was taken, upon your stating to the magistrates what you had seen, for the correction of those abuses, gross as they were, but it was put off on the hope of Mr. Rose's Bill, placing these establishments upon a better footing?—Yes, that was the way I understood it was disposed of; I beg leave to add, upon recollection, that it was settled that Mr. Lister should look after this, and see that they were taken care of as well as the circumstances would admit, until the passing of Mr. Rose's Act.

Do you know whether any thing was done in consequence of that, by Mr. Lister?—No, I do not; but I dare say Mr. Lister did look after it, and probably their situation is mended.

Bryan Cooke, Esquire, called in, and examined.

You are a magistrate of the West-Riding of the county of York;—I am.

Did you in March, 1814, visit certain cells pointed out to you by Mr. Higgins, in the Lunatic Asylum at York?—I did.

In what state did you find them?—I found them newly cleaned out, the stench was abominable; I turned over the new straw which had been put upon the floor, and the boards were wet; and I pressed my stick upon the floor to see whether it was impregnated with the moisture, and I could have marked any letter upon it in the remains of the filth. I should say it was hardly possible it could have been cleaned out for a considerable time; the floor was completely saturated with filth.

Do you know any other particulars of the state of the Asylum at York?—The general state of the Asylum was filthy in the extreme.

Have you read the statement made by Mr. Higgins, of the part which you took along with him, in the examination of the Lunatic Asylum?—I have.

Are the statements there made by Mr. Higgins, of your interference in the business, correct?—Perfectly so; I think it was in or about March, 1814, there was a meeting at which I attended, and I was desired by one of the Governors to go into one of the day-rooms; he said he had a person there that had formerly

worked for him, and he wished to see him. I, together with a Governor and Colonel John Cooke, of Campsmount, went into a day-room; there were about twelve men patients in it; upon opening the door, my feelings were so offended, that I could hardly proceed from the stench; I retreated into the passage and was very near vomiting; Colonel John Cooke, who was with me, staid about two minutes longer in the day-room, and he assured me that he felt the nausea the whole day afterwards.

NOTE.—*The Reader will take notice, that, in the following part of the report of the evidence, the parts published by the House of Commons are in small letter, and my answers to Dr. Best are in letter of a larger size; so that I hope they will be easily distinguished; and the pages occasionally referred to, are pages of this pamphlet—not of the folio edition.*

Veneris, 26^o die Maii, 1815.

The Right Honourable GEORGE ROSE, in the Chair.

‘*Dr. Charles Best, of York, called in, and examined.*

‘Is not your attendance here, for the purpose of making some remarks on the evidence given respecting the York Asylum, of which you were Physician?—It is.

‘Are the questions delivered in by you, such as you wish to have asked you, with reference to some passages of the evidence alluded to?—They are; and I should be glad to answer any other questions which may be put to me by the Committee.

‘(No. 1.) Did you ever observe thirteen women confined together in a very small room up-stairs at the York Asylum?—I did.

‘(No. 2.) Was this a common practice?—By no means; it only occurred in consequence of the usual accommodation of these individuals having been destroyed by the previous fire.

But it continued for several months after Dr. Best had advised the Governors to refuse the offer of the Quakers and of the Governors of the Nottingham Asylum, to receive the patients who could not be properly accommodated in consequence of the fire. And the meeting held the day the cells were discovered, was called by me, in part, to prevent the continued admission of patients.

The very handsome offers of the Quakers and the Nottingham gentlemen, to take part of our patients, were refused because Dr. Best said he had good accommodation for all the patients we had, and he continued taking others in opposition to my remonstrances against it.

‘(No. 3.) Was it likely to be known to the male keepers, what number of female patients occupied the cells at night?—I should believe

not, it being the province of the female keepers only to attend to the female patients.

When the man servant told me there were thirteen women in the cells at night, a woman keeper was standing by, and, I think, Mr. Atkinson, the apothecary. My suspicion that some part of the house was concealed, was excited by observing that there did not appear to me to be beds enough for the patients, even disposing two in a bed.

‘(No. 4.) Do you know any thing of a young female patient, who was permitted to go about the house without any restraint?—I do; the person alluded to was only in a partial state of insanity, and generally conducted herself with propriety; and was in the habit of living during that time with the matron of the house, whose apartment adjoined to the kitchen; it was during her passing from her bed-room to that apartment, that she was seen by Mr. Higgins, as represented in his evidence.

She was running about amongst the men servants: she might, for any thing I know, be going to the matron’s room. I have no doubt she was in a state of insanity: it might be partial—I cannot say it was not. On this subject I shall treat more largely in the letter I propose having the honour to address to you.

‘(No. 5.) Do you know any thing respecting any female patients who are said to have become pregnant during their residence at the Asylum?—I only know of such cases by report, they being said to have occurred many years before I had any connexion with the Asylum.

This may be true; but the case of the young woman, above alluded to, and the facilities afforded to the men servants by their possession of keys of the female wards, may lead a person to believe, that, if other cases did not occur, they were not prevented by any extraordinary care.

‘(No. 6.) Do you recollect the particulars of the case of William Vickers?—I do; he was brought to the Asylum in a violent state of insanity; he continued in the Asylum for a considerable length of time; varying both in the state of his mind and of his bodily health; in the month of September he was seized with an apoplectic fit, and continued in a state of helpless deplorable bodily illness for some time afterwards, his discharges being involuntary, and it being impossible with any degree of attendance to keep him in a state of complete cleanliness; during that period he had a special attendant constantly by him, and was supplied with every extra comfort and attendance which were judged necessary, and which his lamentable situation required; in the month of October, in the very early stage of his convalescence, he was removed from the Asylum; the state in which he then was seen by Mr. Higgins and other persons, who have been mentioned as witnesses on this case, was occasioned by his previous bodily illness, and not by any improper treatment he had received at the Asylum.

Dr. Best is here under a mistake. He seems to suppose that the witnesses spoke only to what they saw after Vickers came from York: several of them saw him during the time he was

there, and would have deposed to circumstances which occurred during his confinement.

The general meeting, on the 2d of December, came to a resolution, after having examined the servants and officers of the Institution only, and not one of the eight disinterested witnesses who were ready to attend if sent for.

Did the illness cause the marks of the whip, and the black bruises almost all over him?—See Appendix, No. V.

‘(No. 7.) Were the keepers permitted to strike or flog the patients?—Never; I myself suggested, and was the means of introducing a law into the Asylum, some time previous to the occurrence of the matter now alluded to; that if any keeper or servant should strike or otherwise ill treat any patient in the Asylum, such keeper or servant should be dismissed from his situation. The Committee of Inquiry made special investigation into that particular subject, and did not find any grounds for believing that patients were subject to beating, or any other ill treatment in the Asylum.

What, the Committee did in this case, I never heard; but I do know that they did not examine the witnesses whose names I had given them, and who could have given information, viz. Vickers, the father of the patient; Sarah Vickers, his wife; Elizabeth Alsop, Francis Moat, and Thomas Leach. I am surprised, after what I had said on the subject, that they did not, if they were satisfied, pass a resolution expressive of their opinion.—Vide App. No. I. and V.

‘(No. 8.) Do you remember the case of Mr. Skorey?—I do; he was in the Asylum at various periods, with certain intervals, for two years or longer: during the greatest part of that time he was constantly visited by his wife, and his wife also frequently (generally about once a week) called upon me to communicate with me respecting him. It is stated in the Minutes of Evidence, that he was repeatedly treated, in the presence of his wife, at the Asylum, with personal indignity. Mrs. Skorey stated in evidence, that she heard him kicked down stairs, which I conceive impossible; and though, as stated above, Mrs. Skorey was in the habit of calling upon me about once a week during the greatest part of the time her husband was confined in the Asylum, she never on any one occasion complained to me of ill treatment, which her husband is said to have received. When I say impossible, I mean impossible that she could have distinguished by the ear whether her husband had been kicked down stairs or not. With regard to his person swarming with vermin, as far as I know, it happened only on one occasion. The case of the Rev. Mr. Skorey was investigated by the Committee of Inquiry of the Governors of the York Lunatic Asylum; and there were circumstances stated in the Minutes of Evidence before that Committee, which do not accord with the statement mentioned in the Minutes of Mr. Higgins’s evidence.

Dr. Best says my evidence does not accord. I think it does with what Mrs. Skorey deposed, though certainly not with what

the servants, who were accused of ill using him, said. He says, he conceives it impossible Mrs. Skorey could *hear* her husband kicked down stairs.

I wish every thing about this Asylum had been as correct as Dr. Best would have Mrs. Skorey's language on this occasion. I admit that from her hearing, she could not positively say that he was *kicked*; but the fact was, that she heard a scuffle on the top of the staircase, and on looking out of the door, saw her husband tumbling down stairs, the keeper being at the top; she also heard him say, that he looked on her husband as no better than a dog. The whole evidence is given by Mr. Gray in his *History of the Asylum*, p. 22. sold by Hatchard, Piccadilly. The committee of investigation did certainly inquire into the case: they *unanimously* found the conduct of the servants so reprehensible, that they were dismissed in consequence, on my motion in August following, by the most numerous meeting ever known, after having heard all the evidence.

(No. 9.) Do you remember the cases of two persons of the name of Thirkell?—Yes; one of them was recovered from his state of mental indisposition, and his friends were written to, to remove him from the Asylum, when he escaped or disappeared from the Asylum. The Committee of Inquiry into this case, as well as that of the other person of the name of Thirkell, and two other persons whose cases were brought forward by Mr. Higgins, and stated in the public papers as flagrant ones, reported that, in these cases, “no sufficient ground of censure has been established.”

I cannot say that a letter was not written as stated here. When I asked the steward if he had the printer's bill for the quarter in which the hand-bill must be charged, he said he had, but when he discovered my object, he said he had lost it. I noticed these two cases to this committee, to shew how improperly they were entered in the books, the one as having “died,” and the other as “removed.”

The following is the evidence given me by Thirkell's father.—Vide App. No. 1. for explanation how those cases were inquired into.

“John Thirkell, the elder, of Sherburn, says, that about a month at least after his son Richard disappeared, his son John went to the Asylum to find fault that they had not made proper search for him, when the man at the gate promised him that they would get some hand-bills printed, and dispersed, but that he, John Thirkell, the elder, never saw any hand-bill. His son was always a very quiet good disposed young man, he never heard of him being guilty of any thing improper.

“18th March, 1814.

“J. Thirkell.”

(No. 10.) Do you recollect the mode in which the deaths and removals of the patients were entered in the books of the Asylum?—They were,

during the time I was physician to the Asylum, and from its first establishment, reported in the books, in all cases, as admitted, removed, or died.

This admits what I wished to prove, viz. that those killed, were entered as having "died," and those who disappeared, as "removed."

Martis, 30^o die Maii, 1815.

The Right Honourable GEORGE ROSE, in the Chair.

‘*Dr. Charles Best*, again called in, and examined.

‘HAVE you any further remarks to make upon the evidence given before this Committee by Mr. Higgins?—I beg leave to make the following observations: The first part of Mr. Higgins’s evidence, which I deem it necessary to notice, relates to the confinement of thirteen poor women at the Asylum, in one small day-room, (Minutes, page 2): upon which circumstance I would merely beg permission to observe, that it was well known to Mr. Higgins, that the usual accommodations of these individuals had been destroyed by a previous fire, and that the arrangement which he witnessed was the result of temporary necessity, and not of habitual practice.

Answered before.

• The case of William Vickers, mentioned at page 5, of the Minutes having undergone an investigation by the Governors of the Asylum, I beg leave to refer to the resolution upon the subject, at page 16 of the Appendix to Mr. Higgins’s letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, which is in these words: “The Governors having taken into their consideration, the statement published in the York and other newspapers, respecting the treatment of William Vickers, lately a patient in the Asylum; and having examined upon oath such witnesses as were competent to afford information on the same, are unanimously of opinion, that during the time that the said William Vickers remained in the Asylum, he was treated with all possible care, attention, and humanity.” An attempt being made by Mr. Higgins, in his evidence on the same case (page 5) to induce the Committee to believe that flogging constituted a part of the treatment of the patients in the Asylum; I think it necessary to state, that the Committee of Governors of the Asylum made this matter an object of particular investigation; and that no evidence whatever could be found to induce them even to suspect such a practice. I also beg leave to state, that a considerable time before the late occurrences at the Asylum, I was myself the means of introducing the following law, to be found in the printed report of the York Lunatic Asylum:—“That if any keeper or servant shall strike, or otherwise ill treat any patient in the Asylum, such keeper or servant shall be dismissed from his situation.”

Answered before.—See App. No. V. and Mr. Nicholl’s letter No. I.

‘The case of Mr. Skorey, which is mentioned (Minutes, page 5,) in such terms as must have excited feelings of horror in the members of the Committee, has also undergone an investigation by a Committee of Governors of the Asylum, who reported their opinion on it in the following words:—“That in the case of the Rev. Mr. Skorey, there has been considerable personal neglect, and that both towards himself and Mrs. Skorey some of the keepers have conducted themselves in a very reprehensible manner.” With respect to the facts of this case, to avoid repetition, I beg leave to refer to my evidence already before the Committee.

And I beg to refer to the evidence in Mr. Gray’s book, where the whole is given at large.

‘The whole of the Minutes of Evidence (page 7,) relating to the inaccurate statement of the deaths and admissions published in the newspaper by the apothecary, is calculated to produce an erroneous impression. By omitting to mention that this inaccuracy did not exist in the steward’s books, in which the only official register of the admissions and deaths was to be found, and by a reference to which books this inaccuracy was afterwards detected; Mr. Higgins has apparently intended it to be understood, contrary to what was the real fact, that 144 persons had perished in the Asylum, of whose deaths there was no official record, or, to use his own language in the Minutes of Evidence, that their deaths “had actually been concealed.” Though the incorrect statement made by the apothecary in the newspapers, was of course very strongly and justly reprehended by the Governors, it did not appear that he had any interest in making it. As, however, my emoluments were variable, and dependent on the estimation in which the Institution was held by the public, it seemed to be thought probable by some of the Governors, at the Annual Meeting in August last, that the incorrect statement in favour of the Asylum might have originated in me, and in consequence a strict inquiry took place on the subject, and it was proved, to the entire satisfaction of the Court, in the presence of Mr. Higgins himself, that I had never on any occasion examined the apothecary’s books with a view to ascertain the accuracy of his report, and that I had never on any occasion altered or corrected it. It is perhaps unnecessary to mention, that notwithstanding this circumstance, Mr. Higgins has given his evidence on this subject in such terms as cannot fail to lead to an inference, that I was probably accessory to the publication of this inaccurate statement.

If I understand Dr. Best right, he attempts here not only to shew that he had nothing to do with the concealment of the deaths, but also that they were not concealed. He says that Mr. Surr’s books were correct: then why was not Mr. Atkinson’s false statement compared with Mr. Surr’s books and corrected? Why was the account sent by Mr. Atkinson to Dr. Best and Mr. Surr for examination? and if Mr. Atkinson’s book was not an official register, why was he employed to make out the account?

Dr. Best says the inaccuracy was detected by reference to the stewards books. I beg his pardon for contradicting him : it was discovered by an examination I made of the register of the parish church of St. Olave's, and a comparison of the number registered as buried, with Mr. Atkinson's publication in the York Courant. I found that in a certain period, twelve were stated in the paper to have died, when seventeen had been buried.

Mr. Surr's books proved to what an extent this practice had been carried. I am obliged to Dr. Best for his hint ; it seems there was an official correct record, and in the teeth of it a statement, by way of debtor and creditor, the totals balancing, false, to the amount of 144, was published in the York papers.

I admit that Dr. Best asked Mr. Atkinson at the annual meeting, if he ever knew him correct the books, and Mr. Atkinson said he never did : but I do not see how this exculpates Dr. Best.

If I am wrong in stating that Mr. Surr's books were false, as well as Mr. Atkinson's, I was misled by Mr. Surr, whose books appeared to me in the same form, and who told me they were the same as Mr. Atkinson's. However, if the books of the former were correct, it appears that all pretence of pleading confused or erroneous accounts is done away. As there was a true account, why was a false one published ?

Dr. Best does not deny the fact that the accounts were sent to him and to Mr. Surr for examination before their publication by Mr. Atkinson, and whether either or neither or both should be deemed accessory, the committee will judge. I never wished to prove whether there was an official record or not : I have proved what I have asserted, viz. that 144 deaths were concealed from the public for the sake of supporting the credit of the house.

Had the examination been so much to the satisfaction of the court as Dr. Best represents it to have been, a resolution of non criminality would, in all probability, not have been wanting.

'The account given in the same page, of the burning of the steward's books, is equally calculated to convey an erroneous idea of that affair ; and a circumstance mentioned in the same paragraph respecting myself, viz. that the physician's participation in the weekly payments of certain classes of patients, was discovered by a book which accidentally came into the hands of the Committee of Inquiry, is perfectly at variance with fact. At one of the very earliest meetings of the Committee of Governors, and the moment the physician's emoluments became the subject of inquiry, I communicated every particular relating to the accustomed mode of remuneration of the physician, by participation in the payments of the different classes of patients who were not paupers. The burning of the steward's books at Christmas last, as mentioned in the evidence, did not take place till eleven months after their examination

by a Committee of Governors, and after extracts had been made from them, distinctly describing the nature and amount of my participation in the payments of the patients, as will be seen by referring to page 48 of the Report of the Committee, subjoined to Mr. Higgins's publication; from whence I presume it will appear, that Mr. Higgins is not warranted in the conclusion, that the burning of the steward's books, however reprehensible in itself, was a deliberate act of selection, for the purpose of concealing circumstances in regard to the emoluments of the physician. The account of the mortality in the Asylum since the death of Dr. Hunter (Minutes, page 9) is stated with corresponding unfairness. An inference is attempted to be drawn unfavourable to the treatment of the patients under my care, by contrasting the mortality of the year ending July, 1814, with the average mortality for 30 years under Dr. Hunter; no mention being made that a long continued and destructive epidemic had prevailed in the Asylum during that year; and that the patients, during a considerable part of the time, were crowded together in an unprecedented degree, and subjected to various unfavourable circumstances by the destruction of their ordinary accommodations by fire.'

For more complete proofs, if any be wanting, I beg to refer to Mr. Gray's history, page 45, 90, and 91, from which the following is an extract:—

"Mr. Surr produced to the committee, those quarterly books which tally with his accompts, and are so contrived, that whilst the physician was receiving considerable sums out of the weekly payments of the patients, he does not appear to receive a single shilling: the other set of books which would have disclosed the stewards actual receipts, he still declared he had destroyed."

In the first instance, Surr had declared that *all* the books were burnt.

One volume out of each set of books for sixteen years, was burnt, and this was the very book which would have shewn the amount of the physician's receipts, and without which the physician's receipts cannot be known. Will any one believe that this was not an act of selection?—See App. No. I. and No. IX.

The subject of the epidemic I have so fully discussed in my letter to you, that it is only necessary to refer you to it. I also beg, that reference may be had to the letter, in the Appendix, to me from Mr. Nicoll, No. I. and No. IX. explaining how the nature of the physician's emoluments became known.

'It was not stated by me, as asserted by Mr. Higgins in the Minutes of Evidence. (page 11) that to my knowledge there were no chains in the Asylum: the only assertion I have ever made on this subject was, that when I was first appointed physician to the Asylum, I found chains were used in certain cases; but that I had gradually and totally abolished their employment: which assertion I now repeat.'

I am ready to swear, that I understood the Doctor to assert, both on the 2d of December, 1813, on oath, and on the 7th of January, without the oath, that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, there were no chains in the house. If the Doctor knew them to be unnecessary, why did he not see them removed, instead of being replaced in the new board.

‘Some evidence being adduced at pages 12 of the Minutes, from which it is to be inferred, that the food of the patients at the Lunatic Asylum was bad; I not only affirm on my own knowledge, that it was both good and plentiful, but have to request that the Committee will permit me to produce certain letters from individuals who had recently been confined in the Asylum at the time Mr. Higgins first published his statement in the York and Doncaster newspapers. The perusal of these letters may possibly tend not only to throw light upon this part of the subject, but also to undeceive the Committee in various other particulars relative to the Asylum.’

‘The witness delivered in the letters, and they were read as follow :

“Sir,

“As we are accused at the Asylum, of harsh treatment, and cruelty to the patients, neglecting to afford them a sufficient supply of proper food; and inattention to cleanliness; I shall be much obliged to you if you will candidly state what you yourself experienced and observed upon these several points, during your residence at the Lunatic Asylum.

“I may possibly have occasion to lay your letter before the Governors; but it shall on no account appear before the public.

“I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“Charles Best.”

“Sir,

“Thorne, Nov. 25, 1813.

“I received your’s of the 22d instant, and observe the particulars.— During the time I was at the Lunatic Asylum, I was treated with the greatest attention towards my recovery, and having had a very good supply of good provisions: with respect to cleanliness, I always had my linen, and other necessary conveniences, kept in very good order: I never experienced any severe treatment from the managers of the Asylum, having been allowed to walk out at convenient times. I can with the greatest propriety say, I never saw any of the other patients cruelly treated; for my own part, I think it a great blessing there is such a place provided for the afflicted.

Addressed

“Sir, I remain, &c.”

“Doctor Best, York.”

“Sir,

“Lincoln, Dec. 1, 1813.

“Mr. S—— not being acquainted with Mr. P——’s address, has just brought me the letter from that gentleman, which he received from you a few days ago, inclosed in one to himself. I will take care that Mr. P—— shall have it immediately on my return to my country residence the latter end of this week, (which will be sooner than if sent by the post) and entertain no doubt of his returning such an answer as will be perfectly satisfactory. In the mean time, to prevent any inconvenience that may arise from this unforeseen delay, Mr. S—— and myself think

it only due to justice to declare, that we have both of us heard Mr. P—— speak in the highest terms of the kind treatment in every respect which he himself experienced in the York Asylum, and of the great care and attention with which the whole concerns of that Institution appeared to him to be conducted.

Addressed,
“Doctor Best.”

“I have the honour to be,
“Sir, &c. &c.”

“Doctor Best,

“Dear Sir,

“I this morning received your kind favour, requesting me to give a fair and candid statement of my treatment during my abode at the York Lunatic Asylum; also wishing me to give my opinion respecting the treatment of the several patients that fell under my observation during my stay at the said Asylum.

“In answer to these inquiries, I can with heartfelt pleasure state, that my treatment was such as every reasonable person must approve of, not having a want unsupplied, as far as wholesome food, cleanliness, and attention could supply them.

“Owing to my elevated spirits and eager curiosity, I lost no opportunity of investigating nearly the whole of the rooms and beds in the two galleries in which I was placed, and found the strictest attention paid to cleanliness and good order through the whole of the rooms I went into.

“I dined twice at one of the public tables, and was astonished to observe such plenty of good and wholesome food, and regretted the want of appetite to partake of the several dishes which were brought in regular succession on to the table.

“My last week’s residence at the Asylum was along with Messrs. D—— T—— and a Mr. K——, who informed me that he had met with the best of treatment during the whole of his stay, and that he had always his meals sent to his room, the quantity and quality of which was such as he fully approved of. I had the pleasure of taking my meals along with him for several days, and had always plenty of good and wholesome food. The room we lodged in contained three beds, which were as good ones as I would wish to sleep on.

“For your kind treatment, dear Sir, I shall ever hold your name in grateful remembrance, and can assure you, that your daily presence at the Asylum afforded me the greatest pleasure; your treatment to me was more like that of a brother than a physician, and I attribute my speedy recovery to your well-judged method of treating me.

“The house apothecary and keepers merit my thanks for their readiness at all times to supply my wants, which were numerous, owing to the keenness of my appetite, which I believe was occasioned by the proper treatment and food that was administered to me during my convalescent state.

“I shall now hasten to conclude, by observing, that if the insertion of the whole, or any part of this letter, (the grammatical errors being first corrected) will be of any service to you, or any individual taking an active part in the establishment, you are perfectly at liberty to lay it

before the public, and beg you will not from any scruples of delicacy withhold it, as misrepresentations, such as you advert to in your letter, ought by all possible means to be crushed in the bud. Independent of your letter, I had been informed that complaints had been made by friends of late patients, against those who had the care of the York Lunatic Asylum. I trust truth will ever prevail over misrepresentation, and if so, those complaints must fall to the ground, as others might be brought forward who could bear testimony to the truth of what I have stated.

"I shall only add, that it is my hope that those afflicted with my late malady may never want a Doctor Best, nor the attention I met with under his skilful direction at the York Lunatic Asylum.

"Hoping this will find you in good health, as it leaves me, I remain,
"Ackworth, 9th Dec. 1813."

"Dear Sir, &c. &c."

"Sir,

"Foston, Dec. 4, 1813.

"I this moment have received your favour from the hands of Doctor G——, and am extremely astonished, and even feel indignant at the foul falsehoods which have been propagated in disparagement of York Lunatic Asylum. From the very high estimation in which I hold that useful establishment, as well as from a warm sense of gratitude for the kind usage I on all hands and at all times received in it, it now becomes imperiously incumbent upon me unequivocally to declare, that no one single instance of the exercise of any harsh treatment or unnecessary severity, came under my observation; had such occasions of complaint ever occurred, from the wide range that was allowed me, both within and without doors, they could not possibly have escaped my notice; I can with equal sincerity and truth, most conscientiously aver, that an abundant supply of food of the best quality, and in a superior style of excellent cookery, was regularly and duly distributed to each patient, from the highest to the lowest, without a shadow of partiality, and with the most humane care and circumspection. As to cleanliness, the uncommon and general attention paid to that point in all its acceptations, branches, and departments, was a constant source of the purest satisfaction to me. In short, this is my decided opinion, and I here solemnly assert it, that the whole routine of business required in the management of the Asylum, was uniformly conducted upon the most humane, cleanly, plentiful, yet prudent plan, that such an institution can admit of, and is therefore justly entitled to my warmest approbation and applause.— Pray accept of my unfeigned thanks for your unbounded kindness to me, and excess of humanity to that motley and turbulent society, some of whom it seems have rendered themselves so unworthy of your regard. That you may long enjoy health and happiness is the sincere prayer of,

"Sir, your much obliged and humble servant, &c. &c."

"Foston, near Grantham, Lincolnshire.

"Charles Best, Esq. M. D."

I have no doubt, that many of the opulent patients were well treated. It would have been strange, indeed, if they had been all used like Vickers and Skorey.

If any attention be due to those letters, they prove that there was one kind of bread for the poor, and another for the rich. It is impossible to raise a doubt as to what the Pontefract witnesses said respecting the bad bread. Dr. Best seems to deny that there were *any* abuses in the Asylum; if so, a great act of injustice must have been committed in August, 1815, when all the officers and servants were displaced, on my motion, for misconduct, except himself, whose duty it was to "correct any thing that was amiss," &c.

"The accusation of my having received a fee improperly, in a particular case, mentioned at page 12, was brought before the Committee of Inquiry at York, by Mr. Higgins, in August last, with extremely aggravating circumstances, and was by that Committee rejected as undeserving of notice; my written reply to the charges, presented to the Governors, I beg leave to lay before the Committee.

'[It was read, as follows:]

"To the Governors of the York Lunatic Asylum.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"An accusation having been this day brought forward against me, by Mr. Higgins, of having charged five guineas for myself, and two guineas or 2*l.* for the apothecary, for extra attendance on one of my private patients at the Asylum about three years ago, the friends of the patient having been informed by me that he had broken his leg, when no such accident had in reality befallen him; I beg leave to observe, that I have witnesses at hand, who, should it be the pleasure of this court, will immediately appear, and as I believe, will prove in the most satisfactory manner, that the patient alluded to did break his leg, and that he moreover suffered a long and distressing bodily illness not connected with the accident.

"In regard to my recommendation of a remuneration to the apothecary for extra attendance, though I cannot speak with any accuracy as to the fact, at the present period, the circumstances being alleged to have taken place three years ago; I think it highly probable that I may have recommended it in the instance under consideration, as I have the recollection of having done so in one or more other instances of casual illness requiring special medical or surgical attendance.

"In regard to myself, though it is perfectly possible that I may have expressed myself as entitled to extra remuneration for extra attendance in the case alluded to, I have no recollection whatever of having done so in this or in any other instance. I can, however, if it shall be required of me, bring forward satisfactory evidence of having declined such remuneration in other cases, when strongly pressed upon me, not indeed from conceiving that I had no right to receive it, but because I believed that the circumstances of the patient's family rendered it inconvenient to them to incur such expence.

"Upon this subject I beg leave farther to remark, that the pecuniary arrangements made between the friends of what are called private patients, in the Asylum, and the physician, having been always consi-

dered, both during the time of my predecessor and myself, as a matter of private contract between the parties themselves ; in order to establish any impropriety on the part of the physician in expressing himself as entitled to extra remuneration in certain cases and under certain circumstances, it must be proved that the friends of the patient were apprized by the physician, at the time the contract was made, that the weekly payment was intended to include extra attendance for protracted bodily illness, as well as ordinary attendance for mental disorder.

“On the conduct of Mr. Higgins in bringing forward this serious charge at the present time, without any previous notice to the person accused, I must leave it to the Governors present to form their own opinions.” (Signed)

‘Respecting the alleged misapplication of money, mentioned at pages 13, 14, and 15 of the Minutes, the annual meeting of Governors in August last, before whom I subjected myself to a voluntary and most rigorous examination, adopted and published the following resolution, viz. “That no criminality attaches to Dr. Best for misapplication of the funds of this institution.” In regard to the mode which was adopted of remunerating the physician, considering it objectionable, I do not in the least attempt to defend it ; but as it was sanctioned by long-established usage, previous to my appointment ; and as the general meeting of Governors at the time I was elected, not only negatively but positively confirmed the existing privileges of the physician, by rejecting a proposition for inquiring into the emoluments before disposing of the office ; I have never felt any doubt in regard to my right of receiving the same emoluments as were enjoyed by my predecessor. I here think it an act of justice due to myself to state, without however assuming any merit for my conduct, that during the five years I was physician at the Asylum, I voluntarily gave up about 200*l.* per annum out of these emoluments, for the benefit of the institution.’

In refusing to inquire into the emoluments of the physician, at the time of Dr. Best’s election, the Governors only repeated what they had done when Mason, Burgh, and Withers, moved for inquiries into the state of the Institution, and what they would have done, with respect to me, if the new Governors had not come forward.—See my letter to you.

The amount stated to have been taken by the physicians, is not denied by Dr. Best, independent of the fees from opulent patients, as stated by me in Mandell’s case, which I only named to the Committee of the House of Commons, to *shew that he did take fees, besides a portion of the weekly payments, (all my calculations were made exclusive of fees ;)* and, in page 20 of my letter, I have also stated that he was entitled to them, not that he took them improperly ; but, on reference to that page, it will be seen that I have there stated no aggravating circumstances, and my evidence given to you, I am certain will shew that I have studiously avoided it. I have merely stated that Dr. Best took a fee of five guineas : every thing else I have suppressed. How-

ever, as he wishes to have the story of the broken leg known, I shall take the liberty of inserting the affidavits relating to it in the Appendix, No. III. I wish Dr. Best had favoured the Committee with the names of the witnesses he proposed to call, to refute this charge. I hope they were not of the copartnership at the Asylum,—the publishers of false statements of deaths,—or the burners of books,—or the servants whose evidence, on oath, the Archbishop would not receive. The affidavits were laid on the table of the Committee of *Inquiry* by me, to be used as they might think proper: after some deliberation, I was called in, and asked if I had any specific charge to make against Dr. Best: I replied, no; that as the affidavits had been tendered to me, I thought I ought not to suppress them, and, accordingly, I presented them to the Committee of Inquiry, who, no doubt, would do with them what was proper and right. They were returned to me without any observation. It is for you, Gentlemen, to judge whether the Committee did right in refusing to inquire. I think common justice to Dr. Best required that an inquiry should take place. I should not now produce those affidavits, if the Doctor had not rendered their production necessary to my justification.

I have discussed the matter of the emoluments so much at large in my letter, that it is unnecessary to say any thing here. I have clearly shewn, that Dr. Best was entitled to nothing but the fees from opulent patients; and it is very well he does not make any great merit of the most prudent of all his actions, viz. giving up 200*l.* a year, when he could no longer keep the whole, to secure the remaining 1400*l.*

‘The assertion at page 15, that the physician had the whole management of the institution, is not accurate, the subordinate officers were not appointed by the physician, and the respective duties of each were regulated, not by him, but by the laws enacted for the purpose by the Governors. The constitution of the Asylum was undoubtedly faulty, and the plan upon which it was built ill adapted to its purpose; but it would be too much to make the physician for the time being responsible either for the legislative acts of the Governors during forty years, or for the evils unavoidably arising from the inappropriate structure of the buildings.’

No one ever said that Dr. Best was responsible for the bad construction of the buildings; neither could he be held responsible for many other things, as long as visitors and committees were appointed; but, after the Governors had ceased to appoint either, and had confided every thing to him, a great responsibility naturally devolved upon him; and if any thing was then wrong, it was his duty to state it to one of the four quarterly courts, or the general court, to which he made his reports, which

regularly met and as regularly had the pleasure to hear that all was well.—See Dr. Best's statement of his duties in my letter.

By the report it appears that Dr. Best was unanimously elected physician to the institution: the fact was, there were several other candidates; but Dr. Best's friends were so numerous, that not one of them had the least chance of succeeding, and, indeed, not one of them was proposed. The attempt to inquire into the emoluments of the physician, was the last expiring effort at reform: none was ever attempted afterwards.

I was told by one of the Governors who voted on the case of Vickers, on the 2d of December, that he originally subscribed to become a Governor for the sake of voting in his friend, Dr. Best, as physician; and that he attended in August also, to vote for him, but that he knew nothing about the question of the abuses: he had never attempted to make himself understand it.

'If I may be permitted to remark on the evidence of Mr. Bryan Cooke, I would briefly observe, that as it only relates to the state of the Asylum during the pressure of very distressing and unprecedented circumstances, consequent on the destruction of half the building by fire, it throws no light whatever on the usual state of the Asylum at other times. Should it however be thought otherwise by the Committee, I beg leave to contradict the assertion, that "the general state of the Asylum was filthy in the extreme," as stated in page 17 of the Minutes; and to assert, that all the upper parts of the house, consisting for the most part of galleries and bed-rooms, notwithstanding the number of patients, were in a cleanly and orderly state. The temporary day-rooms down stairs, where the most uncleanly patients were placed until new accommodations could be prepared for them, were doubtless, as stated in page 17, in a very disgusting condition. This condition however was not the consequence of neglect, as, without explanation, might be inferred from the evidence, but solely the result of unavoidable necessity.'

Colonel Cooke having been so many years a member of your honourable house, must be known to most of you. His character for veracity requires no vindication from me; but I refer you to Mr. Nicoll's letter, App. No. I.

'Do you know that the four cells, or any one of them, alleged by Mr. Higgins to have been concealed from the visitors, were ever shewn to any one visitor?—I do not know that they have been: I know they have been seen by Governors.

'Have you seen any person whose duty it was to visit, who has informed you he was aware that there were such cells?—I know that a Governor had seen those cells.

'Previous to the time that Mr. Higgins asserts them to have been concealed?—Certainly; I refer to the Rev. Mr. Bulmer, of York.'

Mr. Bulmer, in answer to a series of questions from me, admitted, that it was more than two years since he had seen them, but he did not say how much more. I wish Dr. Best had been

kind enough to have told you, why these cells were not shewn to his six friends who went to examine the house, or to the two committees, or to me, until I discovered that excellent key, the kitchen poker.

‘Did it not happen more than once, that patients escaped from the Asylum?—Yes.

‘How were these escapes registered, as removals, or as having made their escape?—As removals, that being the established mode of entering them for forty years; there was no distinction made in the books; it did not fall to my province to examine the books, but I have a general knowledge that that was the fact.

‘Were any pains taken to recover such patients as had escaped?—I believe always, but it did not fall within my province.

‘Were hand-bills printed?—There were; and to the best of my belief, there never was an omission of the printing of hand-bills; but that did not fall within my province.’

I think they ought to have been advertised in all the three York newspapers.

‘What had occurred to make the regulation necessary to prevent the patients being beaten or flogged?—I had frequently heard there was a belief that persons were flogged, and I very frequently walked behind the Asylum myself, and heard such howlings, as, if I was not acquainted with the circumstance of the patients very frequently making noises, I should have believed to proceed from their being beaten; that was more than six months before Mr. Higgins’s statements.

‘It was your practice occasionally to see all the rooms of the Asylum?—Certainly.

‘Did you often see the four cells alleged to have been concealed?—When there were patients confined in the day-time in them, which occurred only occasionally.

‘You only followed the patients into the cells, you did not look to their state and condition?—At the time the patients were in them, I did, and perhaps at other times; but I conceived that the department of taking care of the rooms and keeping them clean, belonged to the house-keeper.

‘You did not consider yourself called upon to inspect the bed-rooms?—When I saw any thing wrong, I observed upon it; I did not conceive it to be my province to attend to the cleanliness of the house, and therefore did not make it a daily practice to examine all the rooms of that very large building.

‘Did not you consider it your duty to see that the house was kept clean?—Certainly, as far as was in my power.

‘Did you, in the course of the five years you were physician, see those four cells that have been referred to?—I did, frequently.

‘How soon after the visit of Colonel Cooke and Mr. Higgins, did you yourself inspect the cells in question?—I really am not able to say at the present time.

‘Was it soon after?—I believe it was.

‘Can you say how long before that visit it was, that you had inspected them?—I cannot.

‘Can you say of your own personal knowledge, that the representation made by Mr. Higgins first, and by Mr. Cooke afterwards, of the state in which they found those cells, is not perfectly correct?—I cannot say it of my own knowledge.

‘Have you any and what reason, from the representation of any other person who had examined them, to doubt its correctness?—I have not.

‘What has been the extent and nature of the interference of the Governors, with respect to the internal management of the Asylum during the time you have acted as physician?—They met at the Asylum once a quarter, and at the annual meeting in August, to examine the accounts, and discuss any matters that might come before them.

‘Did they at those quarterly meetings, inspect regularly the Asylum?—They did not regularly, only occasionally, which was but seldom.

‘What do you mean by inspect; what did they do?—They walked round the Asylum, or nearly round, they walked about the Asylum.

‘Did they see all the rooms?—That I cannot say; they examined the beer and the bread; there was a repugnance on the part of the Governors to enter the rooms where the patients were confined.

‘Then you apprehend they did not see all the patients?—No, I apprehend they did not.

‘To whom then was the management and superintendence committed, in the intervals of those meetings of the Governors?—The physician, the steward, the apothecary, and the matron.

‘Is the Committee then to understand, that the persons now mentioned had the complete management and superintendence of every concern respecting the patients, without any inspection whatever of the Governors, otherwise than that which has been already mentioned?—Yes.

‘What was the regulation of the Asylum, with respect to the friends of the patients being permitted to see them?—They were not permitted to see them without a written order from the physician, except in particular cases; that was left to the discretion of the apothecary on the spot.’

I believe the Governors never, either after Dr. Best's election, or for many years before, made what could be called an inspection of the Asylum: they might walk about the shew part of the house, waiting till the meeting should commence. But I believe, if any one had attempted carefully to examine it, he would have been considered as making a personal attack on Dr. Best.

The whole of the latter part of Dr. Best's answers, tend to shew that he had not the control of the place. It is true the officers were chosen by the Governors; but they were entirely under the orders of the physician. Every application, in case of doubt, was made to him. He ordered every thing. Surely, when he stated that it was his duty to visit every part of the house every day, and to correct any thing he saw amiss, he fully admitted his own responsibility.

I can readily believe, that Dr. Best might have some difficulty in managing a set of officers and servants, who all knew of the secret cells,—the hundred and forty-four deaths concealed from the public in the newspapers,—the false set of account books,—and the amount of the reasonable emoluments. I can readily believe, that it was necessary to correct these gentlemen's failings with a very light hand. However, they cannot blame him for their discharge: they found in him a zealous and an able advocate to the very last moment of the inquiry, and they ought to be grateful.

Martis 6^o die Junii, 1815.

The Right Honourable GEORGE ROSE in the Chair.

‘Doctor *Charles Best* was again called in; and desired to add to his former evidence, which he did, as follows:

‘LEST it should be thought that the resolutions to which I have referred, in contradiction to some parts of Mr. Higgins's evidence, were of little moment, in consequence of their being supposed to have been framed by personal friends of my own, for the purpose of protecting my character, I beg leave to observe, that, with the exception of the first of those resolutions, they were all framed after the numerous accession of new governors, which took place in consequence of Mr. Higgins's appeal to the Public relative to the York Lunatic Asylum.’

I refer to the evidence upon all these cases published at the end of Mr. J. Gray's *History of the Asylum*, to be had at Hatchard's, Piccadilly, and to Mr. Nicoll's letter, App. No. 1.

‘My reason for not recommending the governors of the York Lunatic Asylum to accept the offer of the managers of the Quaker's Retreat to accommodate a part of their patients, on the occasion of the fire, was, that I conceived it was not worth-while for the governors to avail themselves of it, in consequence of the trifling accommodation which would be afforded thereby, four beds only having been offered, and the whole number of patients approaching towards two hundred.’

Four of the poor wretches, who were confined in the concealed cells, might have been sent, without much trouble, about a mile to the humane Retreat of the Quakers, out of the way of the epidemic. But it seems that the lives of insane paupers are of little value, not worth much trouble.

‘What other offer or offers of temporary accommodation were made?—To the best of my recollection, though it did not take place at the same moment, the offer from Nottingham was of eight beds, which I did not recommend them to accept, for the same reasons, superadded to the circumstance of the distance intervening between one Institution and the other.’

The eight and four would nearly have prevented the necessity of concealing the cells.

‘For how many patients did you then want accommodation?—It is quite impossible for me to say at present.’

Dr. Best stated to the meeting in January, that he wanted accommodation for none; and, in opposition to my loud protestations against it, he continued to receive more patients.

‘How many patients were at that time confined in the cells said to be concealed?—It is not in my power to answer that question, for my visits to the Asylum were generally between eleven and five o’clock, which was while the patients were out of their sleeping-rooms.’

After orders had been given to discharge upwards of thirty patients, and after I had exposed the cells, Mr. Graham, Mr. S. Tuke, and several other Governors, went at nine o’clock at night, and found them still occupied.

‘Do you believe that the number confined in those four cells was thirteen?—I do not conceive it possible that there could have been so many; as it may appear from the evidence relative to the state of the Asylum when seen by Mr. Bryan Cooke, that no steps had been taken by myself and the members of the Committee appointed to make temporary provision for the patients after the fire. I beg to observe, that every means in our power was resorted to, to fulfil the duties which were imposed upon us, both by fitting up temporary day-rooms, by placing new beds in the open galleries, and by writing repeatedly to the friends of various patients who we thought might be taken care of at their own houses, to request they would remove them. But various obstacles occurred to the execution of these projects, from unforeseen causes: and the consequence was, that the patients were most inconveniently crowded in their day-rooms for a longer period than they otherwise would have been: some time afterwards, a day-room, which I had immediately after the fire proposed, was actually erected. I beg leave to add, that at the period the fire took place there were to my knowledge three patients in the Asylum, who, after having been previously confined there, had voluntarily returned; two out of the three, without the knowledge or concurrence of their friends. For the accuracy of the statements which I have made in contradiction to those of Mr. Higgins, I beg leave to refer to the following governors of the York Lunatic Asylum:—the Archbishop of York, Godfrey Wentworth, Esquire; Richard Fountayne Wilson, Esquire; the Rev. Robert Croft; John Hall Wharton, Esquire; George Palmer,* Esquire; Philip Saltmarsh, Esquire; George Lowther Thompson, Esquire; the Reverend William Dealtry and the Reverend William Bulmer; by which I would wish it to be understood, that I do not mean that each individual mentioned will confirm each individual contradiction which I have made to the statements of Mr. Higgins, but that my testimony in every point will be confirmed by some one or more of them.’

* Palmes probably is meant.

The keeper told me there were thirteen : what interest could he have to affect the knowledge of the exact number, thirteen, if he were ignorant, or to tell me a wilful falsehood in this case? Besides, I believe him for the very reason which made me find the cells, viz. comparing the beds with the number of patients.

These three gentlemen referred to, must surely have been *mad enough* to have returned to a place such as that described by Colonel Cooke, and Mr. Nicoll in his letter, No. 1.

The concealed cells were so situated, that patients might be in the house for years and know nothing about them. The house was inspected by the Committee of Fifteen once, and by the Committee of Five many times, and yet the existence of these cells was neither discovered nor suspected. I again ask Dr. Best, why they were not shewn by him?

Dr. Best has made his reference to ten persons, all old Governors, with great ingenuity ; for, unless an inquirer should propose every question to the whole ten, if the answer to his question should be in the negative, he can never arrive at a certainty.

Suppose, for instance, you ask Mr. Wharton, if he knows a thing to be true, he may reply he does not ; but this proves nothing, for, it may be said, Mr. Palmes or some one else may.

Extract from the Report of the Committee, p. 5. folio edition.

‘As the Governors of the Asylum at York called the attention of the other House of Parliament, by petition, in the last session, to the management of the establishment, in order to shew that it was unnecessary to subject it to the provisions of a bill then depending, respecting Madhouses ; your Committee are desirous of directing the attention of the House to the parts of the evidence which relate to that establishment.’*

* York, p. 1 to 10, folio edition.

TO
 THE COMMITTEE
 OF
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
 APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO
 THE ABUSES IN MADHOUSES.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I FLATTER myself, that this publication may be unnecessary to vindicate my character from the charge of wilful misrepresentation, to those to whom I am known; but yet strangers to me, who may have read Dr. Best's deposition, may entertain doubts, and I think it is of great consequence to the cause of radical reform, in the management of persons afflicted with insanity, that no one, either in the House of Lords or Commons, should have any plausible grounds to misrepresent your report, by stating that the abuses therein described have been exaggerated.

I confess I was much surprised, when I saw the remarks which Dr. Best had thought proper to make upon my evidence; and I regretted that it was too late, by offering myself to you for cross examination, to clear up any doubts which they might have raised.

After Dr. Best's resignation, I did not wish for further inquiry. It could do no good to the institution, or be productive of benefit to any one, although it might gratify a revengeful disposition. The books burnt under such extraordinary circumstances, would have afforded room, at least, for much discussion; but scandalous as this act was, and evident as was its object, I did not wish to expose it without necessity; and therefore, at the different meetings, carefully avoided all allusion to it. My object was to obtain security for the future: I was willing to waive my just claim to indemnity for the past; and I trust those who know me will give me credit when I say, I have always felt for the very respectable connexions of more than one of the officers of the house; but surely, neither considerations of this kind, nor vulgar personalities, ought to have deterred me from the pursuit of the radical reform I had in view, and which

it was my duty, both as a man and a magistrate, to effect if possible.

It will be in the recollection of Mr. Rose and Mr. Bennet, that, when I was in London last spring, I did not court the inquiry.

I met with Mr. Wakefield, whose exertions in the cause of the unfortunate lunatics have done him so much credit, by accident, at the new Penitentiary at Milbank. I had then been nearly three weeks in London on my own affairs, and was about to leave it in a few days. In conversation with him, he told me he did not believe that Mr. Rose had dropped the inquiry: he pressed me to permit him to speak to Mr. Bennet upon the subject, and to inform him that I was in town. To this I consented; and, in consequence, had immediately a message both from him and Mr. Rose, requesting that I would call upon them.

During my interview with the latter, I represented to him that I thought the inquiry might be dispensed with, as I understood his bill had been lost in the preceding session, from a mere mistake of the Governors of the York and Nottingham Asylums, and that as it would no longer be opposed by them, I supposed it would pass without any difficulty. In this he satisfied me I was mistaken; and I consented to defer my journey home a couple of days that I might be examined.

I name these circumstances, because it has been said that I sought this inquiry merely out of enmity to Dr. Best, as it had been said, in an early stage of the business, that I sought the reform for a similar reason, viz. enmity to a man whom I had never seen and had scarcely heard of, and whom, at first, I did not know to be physician to the institution.

Throughout the whole of my proceedings, it was my object to save Dr. Best's character, as much as might be consistently with the attainment of my object. I considered that some anger, on his part, was what might reasonably be expected. I could not suppose he would give up a very large income, and see the well-founded suspicions of many respectable persons of York, whom he was pleased to consider as his personal enemies, confirmed by an investigation into the state of the Asylum, without some marks of irritation; but I also considered, that, in the *capacity* in which I was acting as a magistrate, it was my duty, whatever I might feel, to let nothing like personality influence my conduct; and if I am now at last compelled to place some circumstances in a stronger point of view than I have hitherto done, and, by so doing expose Dr. Best, I hope I shall be excused by the absolute necessity of the case, if I am to justify myself from the charge of wilful misrepresentation, and to shew that, as much as possible, it has been my desire to exercise forbearance towards him.

Under the influence of this feeling, I suppressed several particulars in my letter to Earl Fitzwilliam, which I might have stated, and which seemed to me to press heavily upon Dr. Best.

I stated, in general, merely that the cells were concealed, but did not state by whom. I might have added, that both the committees, in Dr. Best's presence, directed that all the apartments occupied by patients, throughout the whole house, should be shewn to them; and that he accompanied each of them separately in their survey; that it was his duty to have shewn to both the Committees those cells, the very worst part of the house, without having been directed to do it; and that the Committee of Five, of which he was himself a member, was appointed for the specific purpose of ventilation, and of seeing to the proper accommodation of the patients; and that they, he being present, paid so many visits to the house, that the plea of forgetfulness cannot possibly be admitted.

I might also have stated to his Lordship, that the accounts of the deaths were sent for examination to Dr. Best by Mr. Atkinson, previous to their publication, and that they were not corrected. I might have called his Lordship's attention to Dr. Best's written defence, which he gave to me at Doncaster, to the truth of which he offers to swear, when he says the medical *officers*, in the plural number, will swear to it, there being only two medical officers, of whom he was one. I now beg to call your attention to that paper, (Appendix, No. II.) with this observation,—that the humane servants, who lent their own clothes to Vickers, were the persons who were all dismissed in the August following, for their cruelty and general misconduct. If any one can believe that these keepers lent their own clothes to this poor man, after he had torn his own to pieces, insensible as he was, to the calls of nature, he is more easy of belief than I can be.

If it be said, that by their own clothes were meant the cast off clothes of the other patients, I should say that the expression of "their own clothes," in common language, will bear no such construction; and that, if such had been the meaning, very different words would have been used.

I beg leave further to observe upon this, that, if Dr. Best could be so completely hood-winked by these servants as to be able, honestly and conscientiously, to swear that they did lend their own clothes, for which there was no necessity whatever to this unfortunate man, I am of opinion he was more fit to be an inmate than a superintendent of such a house as this.

I might have published the affidavits of the Mandalls and Masons, (vide Appendix, No. III.) if I had been desirous of producing aggravating circumstances; but I suppressed them.

I gave a copy to no one. It would have been very wrong in me, as a *governor*, to treat the calls for justice of these respectable deponents with contempt; but I did as little as possible with them. I laid them on the table of the Committee of *Inquiry*; and as I refused to act as personal accuser of Dr. Best before *their* tribunal, the Committee of *Inquiry* thought proper not to *inquire*, but to return them to me without any observation. I regret, on account of Dr. Best's family and connexions, that he has placed me in such a situation, that I am under the necessity of producing them now in my own defence. It was absolutely necessary to produce these papers to prove that the weekly emoluments, although enormous, were received by Dr. Best *in addition* to fees, of the amount of which I can form no estimate, and which he received over and above the weekly payments.

The mention of Elizabeth West's pregnancy, induces me to make a few observations upon cases of that kind; and I hope, if I be obliged to encroach on the boundaries of decency, and any feeling and sensible female should happen to see this letter, and, at first, be inclined to take offence, she will pardon me, on considering the difficulty I am under to make myself clearly understood;—and if the unfeeling libertine shall choose to attack what I say with the weapons of ridicule, I beg he will first consider, whether Lord Shaftsbury did not, in opposition to his own doctrine, himself exhibit a proof that ridicule is *not* the test of truth.

Perhaps I shall scarcely be credited, my Lords and Gentlemen, when I inform you, that there have been found persons disposed to skreen or excuse cases of this kind.

I would ask why, if a man has carnal knowledge of a child under a certain age, even with her own consent, he is hanged for a rape, but because she is not able to judge for herself. This seems to me to approximate very nearly to the case of some females in a state of insanity. May they not be as incapable of judging as any child?

Suppose the case of an unfortunate young woman becoming insane: she is put in a strait waistcoat, and taken to the Asylum: confidence is reposed by her friends in the governors and officers that she will be properly treated. Advantage is taken of her disordered state of mind, or her defenceless situation, and she becomes pregnant. The English language does not furnish a word of infamy appropriate to such a transaction.

Under what circumstances the pregnancy of Elizabeth West took place, cannot be known: her testimony would not be admitted; and upon what evidence the magistrates formed their judgment on this case, I know not; but, by a well-known rule

of law, we are bound to believe they had proper legal evidence upon which to form it, until the contrary be shewn. But, besides this reason, which is in itself quite sufficient, we may be very sure that the reputed father, instead of paying the money for the maintenance of the child, would have been very glad to have overthrown the decision of the justices by an appeal to the sessions, could he have shewn that the evidence was insufficient; for this would have saved both his money and his credit. Suppose it be said that the act with the patient was committed during a lucid interval, when she was capable of judging. If this argument of the keeper be admitted, and the evidence of the female rejected, there is an end of all safety and protection for every female in the kingdom, who may be afflicted with insanity. She is, I maintain, instantly at the mercy of every villain, who, with impunity, may use force, drugs, or persuasion, as best suits his purpose.

And let it not be forgotten, that I found these men, who were dismissed from the York Asylum for their cruelty and misconduct, in possession of keys, which opened the ward doors, and the inner bed-room doors, of women of high connexions, beauty, and accomplishments; and that these women were only protected by servants, whose evidence, upon oath, the Archbishop of York had refused to hear. The female, who ran past me when I was threatening to break open the door of the concealed cells with the kitchen fire poker if they did not produce the key, was both young and handsome, and she appeared to me to be then in a state of insanity.

And this was the institution, my Lords and Gentlemen, which petitioned to be exempt from visitation! Where is there a place which bears a higher character than this once did, supported by men of rank, wealth, and great respectability?

Can you wish for a more decisive proof, that every place ought to be subject to the most watchful superintendence—that none ought to be exempt?

I know scarcely any situation in which a young woman is more open to attack than in a house of this kind. Without adverting to very many possible circumstances, let us imagine even the extreme case of actual violence. Any person, at all acquainted with these receptacles of misery, must know, that screams and cries for help are not considered grounds for suspicion of any thing wrong. Suppose the advantage to be taken at a moment when every other officer and servant is out Christmas merry-making,* and force to be used, and the cries for help

* Just as the investigation into the management of the York Asylum commenced, the building caught fire, and half of it was burnt; and it turned out that all the officers and servants, except two, one of whom was ill, were out

to be heard by the other patients, they would probably not be attended to; and if the young woman should tell what had happened, her story would be treated as the wanderings of a disordered imagination, and would not be credited.

In the case of Elizabeth West, if the infant witness and the dates had not proved the fact, she would not have been believed, had she, in defiance of modesty, told the story; and the name of the head-keeper might have descended to posterity, emblazoned on the piece of plate presented to him afterwards by the governors for his uninterrupted good conduct,—a perfect model of fidelity, purity, and continence.

But another and a very curious species of justification of cases of this kind, has been advanced to me. I hardly know how to convey my meaning in terms of decency.

Until I got the case here alluded to, I was prevented from bringing forward any cases of this kind, because I had reason to believe that I should be thus answered. “It is true the patient was pregnant; but that is no charge against the institution: proper means were *purposely* taken to bring her into that situation for the benefit of her mental health.” In the case of Elizabeth West, the payment of the money for the maintenance of the child, instead of the appeal to the sessions, either on the ground stated above, or the insufficiency of the evidence, is a proof of the guilt of the party; and the town’s book at Louth will prove the payment by the keeper *himself*.—See App. No. IV.

I beg that the extremely aggravating circumstances of the cases, which I have stated above for your consideration, may not be construed to apply to the keeper here alluded to. I have not the most distant suspicion under what circumstances the pregnancy of Elizabeth West took place. I know nothing, except what I collect from the warrant for his apprehension and the town’s book at Louth. What I have said is with a view of impressing upon your minds the necessity of some legislative provision for the better protection of persons of every description afflicted with insanity.

On the subject of pregnant females, I could say more; but a regard to the feelings of amiable and respectable individuals prevents me.

On the subject of the excessive mortality, I shall also take the liberty of making a few observations.

I confess, my Lords and Gentlemen, that this part of my charge Dr. Best disposes of very easily, and in very few words,

Christmas merry-making. Notwithstanding the slight and desultory inquiry which took place respecting this fire, and the subsequent report, I have never been able to divest my mind of suspicions of the most horrible kind respecting its cause.

It must be evident to the meanest capacity, that a fever or epidemic may take place in any house, without blame attaching to any one; and admitting, for the sake of argument, that there really was an epidemic, before it be made a ground of censure, some may think it incumbent on me to shew that every reasonable and due care had *not* been taken to prevent it. On the contrary, I think the other party ought to prove that proper care had been taken, considering that I could have no means of information, he had.

I wish very much that, in this case, Dr. Best had been a little more explicit, and had informed us what species of epidemic this was: I should then have been better able to make observations upon it: as it is, I must guess at it, as well as I can. But first, I must premise, that not being a medical man, I am not certain I understand the technical term, epidemic.

Is the itch epidemic? Perhaps, on referring to the state of the concealed cells, and the description of the house in Mr. Nicoll's letter, (see App. No. I.) you may not think the condition in which they were found by Colonel Cooke and the other governors, on the 24th of March, 1814, the most likely either to prevent or cure it,—and that Vickers had it, cannot be doubted; but, as people do not die of the itch, that cannot be the complaint. Perhaps there was a dysentery: if this were the case, I think the kind of bread given to the Pontefract witnesses, if eaten by the pauper patients, would very readily account for it; and it will then be left for you to judge, whether a due degree of care had been taken to prevent it. It seems to me impossible to doubt the truth of the respectable and disinterested witnesses who came from Pontefract to give evidence in the case of Martha Kyd, when they make oath, that they saw the bread given to Margaret Beckwith in the Asylum, and that it was of the most detestable quality they had ever seen.

I am very glad that Dr. Best, by producing the anonymous letters* of recovered lunatics, to prove the goodness of the bread and the merits of the Asylum, admits, that they may be competent witnesses as to what they see or feel during their insanity.† I only wish this had been conceded in the first instance: it would have enabled me to produce such numbers of cases of cruelty, as would have saved me very great trouble in cleansing the Augean Stable.

* As Dr. Best has given you some extracts, I will take the liberty of giving you a few also, with this only difference, that mine, all but one, shall have the names to them. See App. No. XI.

† This completely lets in the evidence of E. West as to the question of the father of her child.

It is very curious, that when a man says the bread in the Asylum was good, he is to be credited; but when he shews marks on his back, and says he was flogged, he is not to be credited.—See App. No. V.

A very extraordinary degree of care to conceal this epidemic, seems to have been taken, for which I am utterly unable to account.

On the 2d of December, (as stated by me in my letter to Earl Fitzwilliam, p. 24,) his Grace the Archbishop, when examining the officers and servants of the house on *oath*, whether they were guilty of cruelty and neglect in the case of Vickers, asked one of them, if there had been any infectious fever in the house,—the man replied, that only a slight appearance of typhus had shewn itself in one or two instances. Dr. Best was present, and made no observation. Now, it is very evident, his Grace's question could be for no other purpose than to ascertain whether there was any complaint to account satisfactorily for the mortality, to which I had called the attention of the governors by a written memorial, (vide App. to my letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, p. 15) read to them, not an hour before, by his Grace; and it is evident also, that, if this epidemic had taken place, it would have afforded Dr. Best the easiest possible means of accounting for the mortality. Then, I ask him, and all his friends present on that day, the reason it was not named? Why my charge was not instantly answered by pleading this epidemic; and why it was publicly heard of for the *first* time before your committee?

On the 2d of December, I did not bring forward charges against any one individual. I could not say which of the officers or servants, within those walls, where, at that time, I had no access, had beaten or flogged Vickers; but I brought them forward as grounds for public investigation and inquiry. (vide App. to my letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, p. 15) which would have the effect either to procure justice for the sufferers, or to clear up the character of the establishment. And the answer to me was, that there was no sufficient ground for general investigation and inquiry; that the house was in the highest possible state of health, order, and cleanliness; that there was no reason to suspect the contrary; and that to enter on a general investigation and inquiry on such slight grounds, would throw a slur on the house, and on the characters of highly respectable men; and, upon this occasion, there was no mention made of any mortality.

Soon after the 2d of December, my statement, that the deaths in the Asylum were to those in the Retreat, from the beginning of the two institutions, *cæteris paribus*, as three to one, was attacked in the York papers, and two anonymous letters were published; but in neither of these was a word said respecting

this epidemic, and the mortality was denied. - Numerous meetings were held; but I never heard that this disorder was named at any of them.

My letter to Lord Fitzwilliam was published October the 3d : two pamphlets were published in answer to it,—one by the apothecary, who has since been dismissed,—and another under the name of Corrector;* but in neither of them is a word said upon this subject; nor is the least notice taken of what I have stated respecting his Grace's question, in my letter, p. 24.

I now take the liberty of asking Dr. Best, why, after having taken the oath administered to him in the presence of his Grace the Archbishop, to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on hearing the man answer (and I affirm he did hear it for he took part in the examination) that there was no fever in the house, he did not inform his Grace of this, as it would seem, equally fatal disorder. I maintain, that, in *foro conscientiæ*, both the man and Dr. Best were bound, in answer to his Grace's question, to have replied,—no, there has been no fever, but there has been an epidemic. And it seems to me to follow, as a matter of course, that, if there had been such a complaint in the house, such would have been the reply.

I apprehend the existence of an epidemic in the house, would not in the least affect the other cases of abuse or neglect; but, if there were not some extraordinary reason to account for it, I think no one will deny that the mortality, if ascertained, will, in fact, prove such mismanagement as effectually to establish something like a high degree of criminality in every person at all responsible for the care of the patients, and render the consideration of all other cases of little consequence. And although we have heard only of an epidemic in the last year, I prophesy we shall, as soon as I have stated one other fact, hear that it had not been very uncommon. The mortality, in the last year, does not seem to be materially greater than in several former ones.

In 1809, the number of deaths were .. 29

In 1810, 23

In 1811, 23

An epidemic is as much wanting to account for the deaths in 1809, as in 1814, in which, exclusive of those occasioned by the fire, there were 29. The proportion of deaths in 1810 and 1811 to the number of patients in the house, is, to those in the

* It has been said the latter was published by the Rev. W. Dealtry, of Wigginton. I thought it too contemptible to receive any notice; but it was answered by a letter attributed to S. W. Nicoll, Esq. I now only name it that Mr. Dealtry may have an opportunity of contradicting a report so injurious to him in every point of view.

Retreat, nearly as four to one. Will another epidemic be ready to account for this?

At first sight, this may appear to reflect on the professional characters of the medical officers of the institution : with that I really believe it has no connexion. The real conviction in my mind is, that Dr. Best, in order that he might be able to say that his house was conducted on as lenient a plan as the Retreat, had ordered all chains to be disused; but had neglected, in lieu thereof, to adopt any increased vigilance or mild contrivances, such as the Quakers use, to prevent the patients from injuring each other; and that, in fact, they killed one another. This, I have no doubt, was one of the causes of the mortality. The case of Chappey, a pauper, (alluded to in p. 7,) is a strong example of this kind. He was shut in a room for the night, when in a state of great violence, and in a strait waistcoat, with three other lunatics, an iron fender and two pewter chamber-pots being left loose amongst them; and, before morning, he was so bruised that he died the following day. At this time, the Committee of General Inquiry was sitting almost daily. Immediately on his death, as if nothing unusual had happened, he was put into a coffin, and sent to his friends in York to be interred. But the Rev. Mr. Graham, suspecting something wrong, would not bury him without a coroner's inquest, which returned a verdict, that he had died from the violence of the other patients.

He was entered in the books, as usual, "died;" and, if it had not been for this troublesome clergyman, the epidemic would have borne the blame.

How many similar accidents happened, it is impossible to know, as the mode of entering all, "died" or "removed," effectually disguised the facts both from the Governors and the public.

After I had produced the fact of the mortality, on the 2d of December, 1813, and it had been strenuously denied, and had been proved, and could no longer be denied, lime, I am told, was thrown into the privies, I believe, not so much to conduce to the health of the house, as to promote the credibility of the epidemic-story, which it had been then found would be necessary to account for that which could no longer be denied.

I prescribed a medicine much more efficacious than lime: I prescribed COMMITTEES and VISITORS: after the application of which remedy, in twelve months only four patients died.

Not long after my prescription, a most extraordinary thing was done by the committee. I am informed, that, with the *approbation* of Dr. Best and the apothecary, no less than THIRTY patients were ordered to be discharged; and

letters were written to their respective friends to take them away.

Who, after this, will doubt the efficacy of my medicine,—visitors and committees? I will warrant it superior even to Dr. Hunter's famous secret—*insane powders*—either green or grey,—or his patent Brazil salts into the bargain.*

At the meeting in August, a resolution, called the non-criminality resolution, was passed, which has been sometimes misrepresented, and sometimes misunderstood. In the proceedings of that day, it makes a very singular appearance, standing like a solitary cypher on a sheet of paper, without preface or appendix, or any explanation whatever why or how it came there; for no stranger would ever think, from reading it, that Dr. Best had misapplied the money; but he might suppose that the steward, or treasurer, or some one else, had misapplied it. I had said that large sums had not been applied according to the original intention of the donors, to the relief of the poorer classes; but I had never said that Dr. Best had misapplied them. I only ought to have said so, instead of exercising any forbearance towards him. However, that this resolution may no longer stand by itself, I will take the liberty of supplying both a preface and an appendix; then it will be as follows; the preface and appendix in Roman letters—the resolution in italics:—

Minutes of the Committee of Investigation, p. 45.

"The Committee having requested Dr. Best to state what he considered to be the duties of his office, stated to the following effect:

"That he exercises a general superintendence over the subordinate officers and servants of the institution; attends the Asylum daily except when prevented by any particular business; visits all the wards and apartments of the patients; orders any thing he sees amiss to be corrected; prescribes medicines for such patients as he judges to require them; directs the diet and treatment he considers most pro-

* Amongst much medical nonsense, published by physicians interested to conceal their neglect, and the abuses of their establishments, it has been said, that persons afflicted with insanity are more liable than others to mortifications in their extremities. I believe this to be totally erroneous. Nothing of the kind was ever experienced at the institution of the Quakers. If the members of the royal and learned College of Physicians were chained, or shut up naked, on straw saturated with urine and excrement, with a scanty allowance of food,—exposed to the inclemency of a northern climate, in cells having windows unglazed,—I have no doubt they would soon exhibit as strong a tendency to mortified extremities, as any of their patients. And I have no doubt also, if you will order the experiment to be tried, these learned gentlemen will instantly exhibit as violent paroxysms as ever were exhibited by either Norris or Vickers, until the united and happy effects of cold and hunger, induced a speedy and wholesome docility.

N. B. There seems to be a very important error of the press, or short-hand writer, in the 28th line of the 82d page of the Minutes of Evidence. The word "Mopro" ought to be substituted for the word "Morris." See p. 97 and 202.

“per in particular cases; settles the rate of payment on the admission of each patient, except in the instance of those who pay less than parish paupers; answers the letters of inquiry from the patients’ friends; informs the parishes or relations of patients when he considers them fit for removal; or directs the steward to do so.”

“RESOLVED—That no criminality attaches to Dr. Best for misapplication of the funds of this institution.”

Extract from the Order Book, 8th February, 1813.

“ORDERED—That the report now produced, and submitted to the court by Dr. Best, be adopted, and that the same be printed and distributed.”

Extract from the Report.

“1813. The Asylum being an establishment without an adequate fund, or an annual subscription for the maintenance of its inmates, the friends of the patients pay a weekly sum proportioned to their ability; and, by this arrangement, the utility of the institution is extended to the various classes of society, and, at the same time, the expences of the indigent are reduced by the payments of the more affluent patients. Parish and other paupers are maintained at the expence of nine shillings a week: the weekly payment of persons in low circumstances, but not absolutely in the condition of paupers, is from ten to fifteen shillings. Patients in better circumstances, and in the higher stations of life, are charged with moderation, according to their respective means. A certain number of patients, in very distressed circumstances, who pay for their own board, and have no assistance from their parishes, receive the benefit of 35*l.* per ann. (being the interest of the ‘reduction fund,’ especially established for the relief of the most necessitous objects at the discretion of the governors,) along with the overflowings of the payments of the more affluent patients. The above payments discharge lodging, board, coal and candle, tea, washing, and medicines; but those patients, whose expences exceed nine shillings a week, are separately charged for their washing.

“The physician is required to attend, without remuneration, on the paupers and on those who are maintained at reduced payments; but is authorized to receive, from the friends of the more affluent patients, the reasonable emoluments of his profession.”

I leave you now to judge, whether Dr. Best was ignorant of the charitable principles on which the institution was founded, and whether, in diverting the overflowings of the opulent patients into his own pocket, which were intended to reduce the payments of the indigent class “no criminality attached to him for misapplying the funds of the institution.”

This non-criminality motion was moved as an amendment of another motion, by a very warm supporter of mine, S. W. Nicoll, Esq. with whom I had not the pleasure to be acquainted, until some time after I had commenced my operations against the abuses in the Asylum. On my introduction to him, he fairly and candidly told me, that, if my object was to ruin Dr. Best, he

would not support me; that he had known him, his family, and connexions, for many years; that he was very sorry for the situation in which he was placed,—but that he was more sorry for the situation of the unfortunate lunatics, who, he was now satisfied, were much abused and neglected; that he was determined to spare no exertions to reform the place; that he would avoid every possible injury to Dr. Best: but that if it came to a question, whether he or the interest of the house should suffer, he would not hesitate what line to take. I need hardly add, that I most thankfully accepted the assistance of such a man on terms so honourable. I have reason to believe, that many of the other governors acted precisely on the same principles with Mr. Nicoll; and this will account for several things which, for want of this explanation, have been thought extraordinary.

The Committee of General Inquiry and Investigation was named by Mr. Nicoll, and was composed of two sets of persons: 1st of old governors, who took a decisive part against all reform, and 2d of gentlemen having the same feelings as Mr. Nicoll, with respect to Dr. Best; so that whenever any thing was proposed favourable to the physician, it was sure to be carried by a decisive majority, provided it was not so strong as to endanger the wished-for reform; and this is the reason why the report of this committee is so odd a mixture of glaring facts and attempts to disguise the real nature of them.

When I brought forward the statement of the misapplication of the money, the friends of Dr. Best alleged in his defence, that he took it because his predecessor, Hunter, had done so; that he did not know that it was contrary to the rules of the institution for him to take it, although a resolution, almost verbally the same as the latter of those copied above, was repeatedly passed in Hunter's time, and Dr. Best had always access to the books; that, therefore, though an extreme misapplication had taken place, yet, as it had been done in ignorance, there was no criminality in it.

By the discovery of the above motion and order of Dr. Best, of the 8th of February, 1813, and the subsequent publication of his report, this defence is no longer of the least service: they were known to few, and not adverted to when the vote of non-criminality was passed.

It appears from Mr. Nicoll's letter, given in the Appendix, No. I. that the motion would not have been made, if the report of 1813 had been known to him. After the appearance of that order and publication, he could not any longer shut his eyes to the real truth, and I believe, though very reluctantly, he gave up the Doctor's cause. I particularly request your attention to every part of Mr. Nicoll's letter.

Some persons have excused Dr. Best, by saying that the governors were as much to blame as he was, in having ceased to appoint visitors, committees, &c. I do not think the governors were justified in delegating such a trust without any check or control to any one, however high he might stand in their opinion; but having once done so, I contend, the greater the trust they reposed in Dr. Best, the greater ought to have been his anxiety and care, so to fulfil the duties of it, that not the least blame should attach to those who had placed such confidence in his care, attention, honour, and integrity. Whether the confidence of the governors was met by a suitable care, anxiety, and zeal, on the part of Dr. Best, I shall not give an opinion: you are masters of all the facts, and must judge for yourselves. I cannot entirely excuse the conduct of the old governors, though I cannot admit it as an extenuation of Dr. Best; and I beg that what they did, and what I requested, on the 2d of December, may not be forgotten.

I produced a great mass of written evidence, partly on oath, of eight or nine witnesses, to prove a fact of abuse: in consequence, I begged an inquiry might be instituted, and that visitors and committees might be appointed. After having examined the officers and servants, on oath, whether they were guilty or not, and no other witnesses, they censured me, and did not appoint either committees or visitors; and neither inquiry, nor the appointment of visitors and committees, would have taken place, if the attempt to whitewash the case of Vickers had not excited the indignation of a number of gentlemen who had long been aware that abuses existed in the Asylum, and who, by subscribing about 800*l.* made themselves governors, and by joining the few old ones, who were of their opinion, procured a majority—a majority at first very small, but which rapidly increased, many of the old governors, who had been excessively prejudiced, but well disposed, soon beginning to see the truth.

Previous to the general meeting in August, I published a letter, which gave great offence, (see App. No. VI.) in which I say, that large sums of money had been misapplied, and call upon the governors to dismiss every officer or servant who had abused his authority, or neglected his duty.

I published this letter because I knew the determined resolution to retain Dr. Best, at all events; and I thought, to preserve something like consistency, that all the rest of the officers and servants would be continued also; for I did not see how the governors could retain the person whose duty it was, according to his own account, “*to exercise a general superintendence over the subordinate officers and servants of the institution;*”—“*To attend the Asylum daily;*”—“*To order any thing he saw amiss to be*

"corrected, &c. &c." and dismiss the rest; and, without their dismissal, I did not think that any real and durable reform would take place.

It was said, that my call to dismiss was premature. The quarterly courts might have dismissed the servants; but, after many months, they were *all* kept in their places. And I believe, if that letter had not been written, they would have been continued. Though that letter roused the anger of all the old friends of abuse and corruption, yet it also awakened public indignation, and the public opinion was not to be resisted.

Until that letter made its appearance, all the officers and servants, and their friends, all the tradesmen, who had been accustomed to make a *good thing* of the Asylum, flattered themselves that, as no notice had been taken of the printed report, the vote of thanks to me at the quarterly court had operated as a sop for the Cerberus; that the old servants and officers would all be retained; that the committees and visitors would continue but for a little time; that the novelty would soon wear off; and that then the house would revert to its old quiet comfortable habits,—good jobs,—bills well paid,—nice perquisites,—reasonable emoluments, &c. &c.

That letter pleased nobody, except a few who, like myself, were *violent* men, that is to say, not half-measure men, but men who saw clearly that, to cleanse the *stable*, strong measures were necessary.

Many of the old and distant governors, who had never seen the report, could not believe that letter: paupers neglected and abused,—casualties disguised,—money, in large sums, misapplied,—the deaths of one hundred and forty-four patients concealed;—impossible! It could not be.

The report of the Committee of Inquiry, which, in fact, though in such terms as almost to disguise the truth,* let out the secrets detailed in my letter, was, by a mistake, not delivered to the governors as it ought to have been, previous to the last quarterly court, which was held before the meeting in August; and it was again, by mistake, not delivered previous to the *general* court in August; so that the public generally, and most of the governors, were kept in ignorance of its contents, until my letter appeared. It might have been discovered before that time, that I was not a man very likely to sit down quietly under such mistakes, the evident effect of which was to render useless all I had been doing.

Upon the continuation in office of the physician, whose duty it was "to correct any thing that was amiss," and the dismissal of

* Of the wilful false statement of the deaths in the newspaper, it was said that due care had not been taken as to its correctness, &c. &c.

the apothecary and steward, the two latter made loud and, surely, well founded complaints of injustice and partiality.

Dr. Best, though an M. D. in full practice, was, for some years previous to Hunter's death, a pupil of the latter, who, by his letter dated York, Dec. 11th, 1804, says, "I have accepted "Dr. Best as my pupil:" again, "I mean freely to disclose to "him the manner of preparing the different medicines so successfully made use of at the Asylum, *and of which the composition is unknown to every person but myself.* You will therefore "take notice, that you keep nothing secret from him." Nothing secret!—not even the secret of giving the Asylum, out of a payment of four pounds a week, ten shillings only, and reserving three pounds ten shillings for himself, as his reasonable emolument.

If your indignation at all this does not prevent it, I am sure, my Lords and Gentlemen, you must laugh heartily at the hypocrisy of this regular old quack.

If all the circumstances of this house be considered, you will not be surprised that its reform was procured with so much difficulty.

Most of the old governors in the neighbourhood of York, in whose charge it had chiefly been, were extremely desirous that the abuses should not be known, in order to conceal their own neglect, and their obstinacy,* in having opposed the attempts at reform made, at different times, by Mason the poet, Mr. Withers, at that time recorder of York, and Dr. Burgh, which now it was evident ought not to have been resisted, and which, in fact, had no more to do with politics, as was artfully represented, than with witchcraft.

The last attempt at reform was made when Dr. Best was elected physician, and was frustrated, as usual, by the plea, that there was no ground to inquire into the emoluments of the physician, as there was no reason to believe that any were improperly taken. No governor could positively assert that any were improperly taken, because he could not see the accounts, the whole of them, of every kind, being always made up as published by the physician, Mr. Atkinson, and Mr. Surr, without the intervention of any governor whatever; and if he had got a sight of the books, false ones were provided; and for what could they be designed but to meet such an occasion as this? And now at last (the plea of ignorance being abandoned) the failure of this attempt is the only ground on which Dr. Best

* This was the real reason why I refused to trust the case of Vickers to their tribunal on the 2d of December, but appealed to the public. Experience has justified me; and when, in my next letter, I said I regretted what was done, I did not allude to myself, but to others.

can rest his justification for having taken these large sums ; and which I now take the liberty of telling him, he is bound, in *foro conscientiæ*, to REFUND. He has no right whatever to them : they are the property of the POOR. I affirm, that, if all the money improperly taken by Drs. Hunter and Best, for patients in the Asylum, had been received half yearly and placed out to accumulating interest, after allowing the physician the same stipend as that now allowed to a most respectable physician, Dr. Wake, the institution would have been richer than it is by upwards of 40,000*l.* and there would have been no need to tax this county for the new Asylums at Wakefield or Northallerton. If my calculations be examined, they will be found to be made upon sums below the actual averages. The sum will exceed 40,000*l.* even upon Mr. Gray's calculation, and he has evidently endeavoured to reduce it as low as possible : he has also taken the highest payment yet known at seventeen shillings a week less than the truth,—3*l.* 3*s.* instead of 4*l.*

I am by no means certain that I have taken the highest weekly payment, four pounds a week, high enough.

The Rev. Doctor Bristow paid four pounds a week, out of which the institution received ten shillings, the remainder 3*l.* 10*s.* being paid over to Hunter for his reasonable emolument, and the use of his "*secret insane powder* !"

It is a curious fact, that there is an order in the book to limit the number of opulent patients to 25 ; but the number, 25, has been obliterated by an *accidental* drop of ink. I do not believe that *that* drop of ink would have *dropped* there, if more than 25 opulent patients had not been received into the Asylum. The blotted figures are known to have been 25, from a posterior reference to them in the book, which I have no doubt was overlooked when the 25 was blotted.

When the physician had the opportunity of boarding such men as Dr. Bristow, for ten or fourteen shillings a week, it is not likely he should ever have sent them to his private house, until he could send no more into the Asylum. And by a rule of 1788, July 3d, he had a power, by dismissing such as he pleased to call incurables, to leave room always for the opulent patients who offered. Dr. Best claims merit for raising the payments of the opulent patients from ten to fourteen shillings a week. In pursuance of my plan of forbearance, in my letter to Earl Fitzwilliam, (p. 21) I gave Dr. Best the full benefit of this argument ; but I might have observed, that, if he had not so raised them, from the increased price of every article of life, the expences of the house could not have been paid ; and an inquiry would have taken place, the secret would have got out, and he must have lost the whole.

Earl Fitzwilliam, at the most numerous meeting of governors ever known, declared, that he had not the most distant suspicion of such an abuse, or he would not have tolerated it for a single moment ; and he further declared, that he did not believe that it was known to the other governors. I am sorry to say, I differ in opinion with his Lordship : I believe it was known to several of them ; but, when his Lordship made this public declaration, there were none of them found shameless enough to avow it.

I shall in the Appendix (No. VIII.) insert the proceedings of the last general court of governors of the Asylum. I must say, I feel much gratified by the compliment it has thought proper to pay me ; more particularly, as it can hardly be supposed possible that it would have paid me such a compliment, if it had thought I had been wilfully misrepresenting or exaggerating any thing to you. Every thing that had passed before your Committee must have been well known, several of your Committee being present, and forming part of the court.

Dr. Best has accused me of wilful misrepresentation, and of making statements at variance with fact. We will now see whether this serious charge will more properly apply to me or to himself. Of my statement, that the physician's participation in the weekly payments was discovered by a book, he says, (p. 24) that it is at *variance with the fact*, and that HE disclosed the circumstance to the Committee.

It will not be said that S. W. Nicoll, Esq. barrister at law and counsel to the corporation of the city of York, is not as credible and as competent a witness as the interested physician.

I refer you to his letter, (App. No. I.) in which you will see, that he expressly and flatly contradicts this assertion of Dr. Best.

Mr. Gray, and the Rev. Mr. Graham, were the two gentlemen to whom the accounts were referred, and they both clearly and unequivocally contradict this assertion. I refer you to their letter, (App. No. IX.) ; and if this evidence be not sufficient, I refer you to the report of the Committee of Investigation, (p. 45 to 48, which will be found in the Appendix to my Letter laid by me upon your table,*) and, after you have read it, I defy you to disbelieve their assertion confirmed, as it then will be, by the evidence of your own eyes.

It there appears, that, on the 26th of January, an inquiry was made into the salaries and duties of the officers of the institution ; but that no question was proposed to Dr. Best respecting his emoluments. The Committee then adjourned to the 28th, on which day Messrs. Graham and Gray appear to have made their statement of the classification and payments of the patients.

* My Letter to Earl Fitzwilliam, to be had at Rivington's.

Then it was that the secret was let out, and then, and not before, as you will see in page 49, Dr. Best refers to the classification "*now stated*," that is, to Messrs. Graham and Gray's report, and acknowledges what it would have been madness any longer to attempt to conceal.

I trust I shall now no more be accused by Dr. Best, of stating things at variance with fact.

Dr. Best will hardly class Messrs. Graham and Gray with his violent opponents, when he recollects that they both voted in his favour on the non-criminality resolution, knowing perfectly well the whole history of the false accounts. Should the disclosures I now make be galling to Dr. Best and his friends, they must not impute blame to me on their account. For my own justification, I have been compelled to produce what I had before suppressed out of regard to them; and I beg it may be observed, that it is not I but Dr. Best who so kindly blazons forth the names of his friends in this most honourable transaction. Dr. Best has referred you, for confirmation of what he has thought proper to say in contradiction to my statements, to his Grace the Archbishop of York and ten gentlemen whose names are given in your report. To such of these gentlemen as live in the neighbourhood of York, the distant governors have naturally delegated the duties of a more watchful superintendence of the Asylum than their remote residence would allow them to exercise; they are principally the gentlemen whose respectability of character the public naturally consider a sufficient surety for the proper treatment of the patients. They, of course, must be *very indignant* when they discover that the contrary has been the case; and I cannot believe that they have given permission to Dr. Best to make use of their names in the manner he has done, to countenance the perversion of this excellent public charity to one of the most infamous of jobs—a job pre-eminently infamous, because accompanied by a total disregard of the miseries of the poor helpless wretches, by the officers and servants, to whose care and protection they were confided.

I cannot, I will not believe, that his Grace the Archbishop of York has lent his name to countenance such a transaction, to palliate the "*extreme misapplication*," to use his Grace's own words, of the funds of the institution, by which large sums of money, the property of the poor, were diverted into the pocket of an individual. I will not believe this of a prelate whose humanity and benevolence are so well known, and the liberality of whose sentiments and opinions, reflects an honour on his elevated situation.

It ought, with respect to his Grace, to be recollected, that he has only been a short time at York, and it would be a want of

candour in me not to declare, that I sincerely believe he was deceived by artful misrepresentations as to the state of the place, and that, when he voted, that no criminality attached to Dr. Best for misapplication of the money, he, like Mr. Nicoll, was unacquainted with Dr. Best's motion and the order of the 8th of February, 1813.

Contrary to my belief, should these gentlemen, however, have so far forgotten what they owe to themselves, as to have lent their names to countenance this transaction, and the assertion that I have stated things at variance with fact, I hope they will be careful not to give an opportunity to censorious persons to quote against them the old proverb, "*fraus latet in generalibus*;" that they will avoid the use of general terms—gentlemanly man—man of unquestionable honour—trifling irregularities much exaggerated—and similar unmeaning phrases; and that they will come at once to particulars; that they will shew that I have not proved, by the report itself, as well as by the evidence of Messrs. Nicoll, Graham, and Gray, that, when Dr. Best was accusing me of having misrepresented him, he was misrepresenting a most material fact, to screen the misapplication of the money.

That Vickers was not neglected and abused.

That the two surgeons, of the name of Maples did not know the itch or a mortified limb, when they saw it.

That Francis Moat, and the other witnesses in that case, perjured themselves.

That the Rev. Mr. Skorey and Martha Kyd were not cruelly and improperly treated.

That the Mandalls, Mr. Mason, and the Pontefract witnesses to the bad bread, also perjured themselves.

That Colonel Cooke and Messrs. Nicoll, Graham, and Gray, have all given false evidence.

That the filthy cells were not concealed.

That the casualties were not disguised.

That the mortality in the house was not excessive, and could not be accounted for, by any other means than general neglect and ill usage.

That the deaths were not stated falsely to the public, to the amount of 144 at least, in order to conceal the dreadful mortality.

That this false statement was not sent to Dr. Best for examination, previous to its publication, and was not returned to be published, without any correction.

That large sums of money were not misapplied, by their friend, the physician, to his own use, in the very teeth of an order of his own shewing that he had no right to them.

That false books of account were not made out, which concealed the emoluments of Dr. Best, and concealed nothing else, and that the true ones were not burnt.

And, finally, that Dr. Best was not, in fact, considered, both by the governors and himself, to have the whole and sole management of the place, and was not, consequently, responsible for all the neglect and abuse which prevailed in every department.

All these facts they must deny and disprove, before the respectability of their names will have any weight either with you or with the public.

My Lords and Gentlemen, I hasten to conclude; and, I trust, I may now be permitted to hope, that I have proved, beyond a doubt, the shameful abuses which existed in the York Asylum, and the absolute necessity of strong parliamentary measures to prevent their recurrence; and, also, that I have completely exculpated myself from the charge brought against me, of stating things at variance with fact, and of wilful misrepresentation;—but I now feel conscious that, in so doing, I have sinned past all hope of forgiveness. With unhallowed hand, I have violently torn aside the veil which concealed the secrets of this *filthy temple of MOLOCH*. I have asserted nothing, however, but what I sincerely believe I can prove, and what I am willing to repeat, at the bar of your honourable house, or, in more solemn form, at the bar of the House of Lords,—still continuing to disregard the intimation formerly held out by Dr. Best, that this investigation, if persisted in, *would end in blood*.*

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentleman,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GODFREY HIGGINS.

SKELLOW-GRANGE, Doncaster, 1815.

POSTSCRIPT.

I think it necessary to guard the reader from falling into a mistake, under which I confess I laboured, until, by a late inquiry, I was undeceived. The thirty patients ordered to be discharged, (*vide p. 47*) were not all supposed to be recovered, part of them, from being in an inoffensive state merely, having been considered no longer, under all existing circumstances, fit subjects for confinement in the Asylum.

* This I am prepared to prove whenever properly called on.

The Committee of Five was appointed in my absence, soon after the fire, at a special court, for the purpose of ventilating the house, and affording temporary accommodation to the patients. It consisted of three old, one new governor, and Dr. Best; and, as four of its members maintained that the house was in the best order possible, it was not to be expected that it would do much for its improvement. I was dissatisfied that it had not found the concealed cells, or improved the state of the house; and at the quarterly court, 14th April, 1814, I proposed to dissolve it, but it was said, that such proceeding was very ungracious, and that I had better add to its number, (App. to my letter to Earl Fitzwilliam, p. 28). To this I consented, and four new governors were added to it, viz. the Rev. J. Richardson, Mr. S. Tuke, Mr. Thorpe, and Mr. D. Priestman. This instantly gave it efficiency; and Dr. Best says truly enough, (p. 35) that we ordered the friends of patients (he might have said upwards of thirty) to be written to; but all these orders were issued after the new members were added to the Committee, and in consequence of such addition.

I have much pleasure in taking this opportunity of stating, that the Asylum seems to me to be now under a most excellent system of management; and the late energetic conduct of the governors, in dismissing one of their officers for misbehaviour, gives a reasonable assurance, that it will not only be continued, but improved.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

1688

The first year of the reign of William III. and Mary II. was a year of great calamity to the kingdom of England. The French king, Louis XIV. having declared war against the Emperor, the King of Spain, and the Dutch Republic, the English king, James II. was obliged to declare war against France. The English fleet, under the command of the Duke of Berwick, was defeated by the French fleet at the battle of Beachy Head on June 1. The English army, under the command of the Duke of Monmouth, was defeated by the French army at the battle of the Boyton on July 1. The French king, Louis XIV. having declared war against the Emperor, the King of Spain, and the Dutch Republic, the English king, James II. was obliged to declare war against France. The English fleet, under the command of the Duke of Berwick, was defeated by the French fleet at the battle of Beachy Head on June 1. The English army, under the command of the Duke of Monmouth, was defeated by the French army at the battle of the Boyton on July 1.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

LETTER FROM S. W. NICOLL, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

DR. BEST's examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, appears to me open to much observation. I by no means think it was his intention to deceive the Committee; but he was an interested party, and nothing was more probable than that he should deceive himself. He has always considered his own character to be involved in the past state of the Asylum; hence a predilection naturally arose to palliate and excuse that state; and these arguments, which satisfied himself, he has easily imagined would also satisfy others.—My own opinion of the Asylum is, that there were no known systematic cruelties* committed in it. The higher patients paid well, both in fees and in perquisites, and were, in general, well treated; but the deficiency in superintendence and subordination was universal, and when a keeper became teased and irritated with his patient, there was no check to the indulgence of his own temper. This is abundantly evident from Mr. Skorey's case, which can be attributed to nothing but the common principles of the place.

Of the state of the poorer patients, I cannot speak but in terms of the strongest reprobation.

They wanted every thing: air, exercise, cleanliness, clothes, amusement.

Being pretty well acquainted with the receptacles of the poor, with prisons, work-houses, and hospitals, I can unhesitatingly assert, that I never met with any thing approaching the filthy and wretched state of the inferior parts of the Asylum prior to the late reform. The squalid wretchedness of the lower patients, the fœtid damp of their cells, struck the mind with horror, and fastened on the imagination.

The observation commonly made is, "having obtained a salutary reformation, why not let the subject rest?"

When one party ceases to *defend* the past state of the Asylum, the other will have no inducement to expose it. The question

* From much consideration, I am decidedly of a different opinion, (vide App. No. XI.) I believe a regular system of cruelty was practised, flogging, starving, and dark and solitary confinement, in order to reduce the spirits of what are called high patients, and I believe not a few perished in the experiment.—G. H.

is of a truly public nature. This case is but one of many ; and if the misconduct of the York Asylum is to be palliated, softened, and excused, so may that of every other institution ; and the combined evidence of abuses, whence alone a parliamentary remedy can be hoped, may be frittered away into insignificance, and lose all hold on the mind.

If we permit it to be said, that the charges of abuse are a mere cry of faction,—that personal hostility, and not public principle, is at the bottom,—every keeper of every lunatic receptacle may have his personal enemies too, and the whole question may be resolved into party spleen or professional envy. As an example, the York Asylum stands pre-eminent and almost alone. Instituted by persons of the first character, conducted by those who founded it, and their no less respectable successors, the vigilant attention of the public at large,—nay, its forcible irruption into the very heart of the fabric, could alone rectify the abuses which existed.

The confinement of thirteen patients in a very small chamber, was not, I believe, a common practice ; yet it cannot be said to be either occasional or necessary : not occasional, for it lasted a very considerable time. The fire happened on the 28th of December, 1813 : on the 28th of January following, the Committee walked over the house. My attention was accidentally drawn to this shocking receptacle, filled with clamorous maniacs, who were reciprocally stimulating each others fury. Mr. S. Tuke has since informed me, that this number, or nearly this, remained, on the whole, several months thus pent up.

If it was not occasional, neither was it necessary : other parts of the house were not similarly crowded ; more patients might have been discharged ; accommodations offered elsewhere might have been accepted ; they were refused through Dr. Best, and he continued admitting fresh patients, till a special order preventing it was obtained.

I have already expressed my opinion respecting known and systematic cruelty : the special investigation to which Dr. Best alludes, respecting the personal ill usage of patients, was not, however, sufficient to prove how this point stood : it was denied by all the persons connected with the Asylum who were examined, and *no other evidence* was adduced. It is exceedingly important to know what was the real nature of the investigation alluded to. Six or seven cases casually brought forwards, were referred to a Committee : after examining into three, it seemed to be the unanimous opinion of this Committee, that the whole affairs of the Asylum must undergo a revision. I here proposed to close the inquiry : the desired end was obtained, which was, *not* to detail the past, but to reform it. Additional cases poured

in upon me; but further attention to them was wholly superfluous.

The resolutions alluded to by Dr. Best, were drawn up by myself, and were formed not for the purpose of expressing my own particular sentiments, but of obtaining that *unanimous* support which I conceived most conducive to the purposes of reform.

Dr. Best's observations on Mr. Skorey's case are obvious and striking: they did not escape the Committee who decided on that case, after fully and deliberately weighing these observations.

The destruction of the Asylum books, a point of principal moment, seems intimately connected with their discovery, and an attention to *dates* is essentially requisite to clear up this point.

An inquiry into the payment of patients was, on the 24th of January, 1814, referred to Mr. Graham and Mr. J. Gray: to them Mr. Surr, the steward, was ordered to send his quarterly statements of accounts for the year 1813. One quarter's account was missing; of another quarter, two statements were transmitted, both, apparently, complete documents, but each, in fact, essentially differing from the other. In one statement, certain patients appeared to pay 10s. per week—in the other, 9s. patients of 15s. per week, in one book, were reduced to 11s. in the other. In all the other quarterly accounts, save this one, the patients were regularly rated at the lower sums. That two distinct sets of books should be kept, thus importantly varying, was a circumstance pregnant with suspicion; that the double entries were meant for the purposes of deception, could scarcely be doubted. One mode of entry was meant to be used—the other to be shewn:—by one, the bills to the patients were to be made out—by the other, the supposed receipts from them were to be exhibited. From inquiry, this appeared clear, the smaller sums alone were carried to the credit of the house—the larger sums were actually received: the difference was paid to Dr. Best.

Prior to this discovery, not one word had been said in the Committee of the nature of Dr. Best's emoluments: that the discovery was accidental, can scarcely be doubted. With the exception of this sort of duplicate, the accounts sent were all those prepared for the public eye. There could be no intention of omitting one quarterly account: it was contrary to the order: that quarter's account then was supposed to be sent; but, by mistake, a quarter of the secret accounts was substituted. Had there been any intention of producing the secret accounts, all would have been sent. In withholding the real statements, the very thing was done for which this double entry was intended.

On the 28th of January, 1814, the day on which this disclosure was made by Mr. Graham and Mr. J. Gray in the committee, and after it was made, Dr. Best was examined by myself in the Committee on the subject of his emoluments: he very freely admitted the payments to him to be such as these books had laid open, and it appeared that from this source he had received about 300*l.* per annum. Dr. Best then is mistaken in considering the account of payments to have originally proceeded from himself. I certainly consider it as no more than a mistake, neither do I at all attribute to Dr. Best, either the withholding of the accounts in the first instance, or their destruction in the last.

Of the quantum of emolument received by Dr. Best from the patients of the higher classes in the Asylum, on account of whom he paid 14*s.* per week each into the Asylum, and from whose friends he received such weekly payments as were mutually agreed on, he at this meeting, January 28th, said nothing. Mr. Palmes told me, in private, that Dr. Best would, if desired, enter on the subject of private patients, but I did not feel authorized to request it. Long after this period, and when Mr. Surr was leaving his office, he was desired to deliver up the Asylum accounts. At first he said he had burnt them; he was applied to again, he then acknowledged he had not burnt *all*. At length he gave up a large quantity. What he *did* give up contained none of the full receipts from the patients; what he burnt, or still retained, contained these true statements, and consequently would, when compared with the accounts actually given up by him, and comprising the diminished payments, have proved the amount of Dr. Best's receipts. The same deliberate selection appears here as originally—there was obviously a purpose to be answered; it is not *chance* which could destroy one set of books, from which danger was to be apprehended, and preserve another from which there was none. Here again those books alone were forthcoming, which it is clear from their construction were alone meant for the public eye. No one will doubt the *design*, when the books were originally sent to Messrs. Graham and Gray, and when we, in the last instance, see a similar effect, we naturally look for a similar cause.

It is often observed that there could be no reason for destroying these books as their contents were already known. Before the time of such destruction it had been pretty generally rumoured that Dr. Best ought to be called on to refund a very great proportion of his receipts. Mr. Surr would readily and perhaps justly conceive that the books destroyed were essential to the establishment of any such claim against Dr. Best, particularly as only one detached quarterly account of this series

had been inspected by the Committee. Although the nature of Dr. Best's emoluments became thus known, their amount has to this day been matter of conjecture.

I thought you stated them too high in your letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, but, from a recent fact, I have altered that opinion. Greatly diminished as are the comparative payments of the higher classes of patients, they would now produce 690*l.* on the principles of Dr. Best's receipts from them. The former amount of their payments must have been very considerably higher than that sum, the inferior patients produced about 300*l.* I think 1400*l.* per annum is a reasonable estimate.*

That this or a much less considerable annual sum should be received by the physician to the Asylum, I think eminently wrong. But at the meeting in August, 1814, it appeared to me unjust that Dr. Best should be censured for misapplying the funds, I considered him as simply treading in the steps of his predecessor, partaking of established emoluments, which, if not directly authorised, were not directly forbidden. When I found, some weeks afterwards, that it was the law of the Asylum that the payments of the rich should form a fund for the relief of the poor, and that the physician was authorised to receive from the higher classes the reasonable emoluments of his profession only, and that this law was known to Dr. Best, having been published by himself in the Asylum report of 1813, my sentiments on this subject were materially altered, and my conduct at the recent meeting became a subject of regret.

I do not think it quite fair to advert to the mortality of any particular year; but it is certain, the mortality of the Asylum was comparatively increasing up to the period of the recent changes; and it is a fact, conclusive, I think, on its past and present state, that, in very near twelve months, five patients

* As Dr. Best has not informed us what was the amount of the highest weekly payment of the opulent patients, we cannot take the annual income from this source much higher than is here stated; but I conceive the real value of the place to him must have been considerably more. Let it be recollected that all these estimates are made independent of fees, and it appears from the evidence in No. III. that they were regulated by Dr. Best's own discretion merely. The name of physician to this place enabled Dr. Best to fill his private Mad-house at Acomb with patients of high rank and great wealth, the overflows of the Asylum, and even private lodgings besides, and that patients of this description pay enormously is well known. The consumption of the ready money customer, the Asylum, must have been of first rate consequence to the favoured tradesmen in York; the tailor, grocer, shoemaker, druggist, butcher, draper who supplied bedding, which was found by the visitors so short that it would not cover the feet of the patients; miller that supplied meal to make bread, such as the Pontefract witnesses eat; and last, though not the least, the coffin maker. With all these gentlemen at his command, no doubt Dr. Best's family, and Mad-house at Acomb, would be supplied well, and on reasonable terms.

only have died,—a reduction of mortality from one in eight or nine, to less than one in twenty of the average number of patients.

Dr. Best has brought forward the letters of several persons formerly patients in the Asylum,—a species of testimony to which I feel no inclination to object: much evidence of this sort has been in my possession, differing, however, most essentially in its tendency from the testimony now produced. I do not conceive the treatment of the patients to have been universally harsh: when they created no trouble, they received no ill usage; and the accommodation of the superior classes might well be called comfortable. Of the kindness of the late apothecary and matron, Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson, to many of the patients, I have had convincing proofs; and that Dr. Best uniformly conducted himself with gentleman-like civility, I feel well persuaded.

Various passages of the letters produced might, however, shake a confidence, not very firmly fixed, as to the value of the whole. The gentleman, who writes from Ackworth, says, “I dined twice at one of the public tables, and was astonished to observe such plenty of wholesome food, and regretted the want of appetite to partake of the *several dishes which were brought in regular succession on the table.*”

I have much oftener than twice attended each of the public tables of the Asylum, and must observe, that the above expression neither is, nor was, nor ought to be, applicable to any one of these tables.

The gentleman, resident at Foston, says, “I can with equal sincerity and truth most conscientiously aver, that an abundant supply of food of the best quality, and in a superior style of excellent cookery, was regularly and duly distributed to each patient, *from the highest to the lowest*, without a shadow of partiality, and with the most humane care and circumspection.”

Let us hear what Mrs. Atkinson, the housekeeper, says on the subject of the patients diet; (vide report of the Committee of Inquiry, p. 52.) “The middle class of patients have three meagre days, they have a separate table from the paupers. On Saturdays the middle class have principally cold meat, and the lowest have offal in hash. She separates the coarsest parts for the lowest patients.”

The superior classes it also appears from Mrs. Atkinson lived in a very different manner from the lower.

As to cleanliness the same gentleman observes, “The uncommon and general attention paid to that point in all its acceptations, branches, and departments, was a constant source of the purest satisfaction to me.”

Can this gentleman speak of the same house in which yourself and Colonel Cooke saw the secret cells, in, it is presumed, their ordinary state? Of a house in which the patients themselves, and the places they inhabited, were to a great extent objects of loathing both to the sense of smelling and of sight? Surely the exhibition of letters like these resembles more the act of an unskilful advocate, than of a sensible man, judiciously supporting his own cause.

There are many other parts of Dr. Best's evidence not less open to observation than those here adverted to; but they are in too able hands to require my attention, which has been given chiefly to those points on which my local situation and knowledge enable me to speak.

I remain, dear Sir, &c. &c.

S. W. NICOLL.

No. II.

Dr. BEST's DEFENCE.

THE following statement will be verified *on oath*, by the individuals whose names are mentioned below, and by the medical officers of the York Lunatic Asylum.

Charles Holgate, a keeper in the Asylum, had the special charge of William Vicars, from his coming to the Asylum on the 17th of April, to the middle of the summer, during the whole of which time he was in a state of almost incessant violence, and when his hands were confined, was in the habit of tearing his clothes with his teeth. During this period he tore both his suits of clothes entirely to pieces, some time afterwards he was provided with a new suit of clothes; the said Charles Holgate, in the mean time, viz. for about six weeks, supplying him with clothes of his own.

About the middle of the summer, Samuel Winn, another keeper in the Asylum, was appointed to take care of William Vicars. Soon after this time he became less violent, being much weaker, and showing a strong tendency to palsy: he continued however to tear his clothes, and within a very short time completely destroyed his new suit, with the exception of two shirts and two pair of stockings. During the remainder of the time he was in the Asylum, he was supplied with different articles of clothing by the keepers.

About the end of September, he had an apoplectic fit, laying speechless and senseless for two or three days, from which he was recovered by suitable treatment, and from the effects of which he was only convalescent at the time he left the Asylum.

During his illness he had a fire always in his room, and had a special attendant constantly sitting by him; and, besides, the assiduous medical treatment he received, he was abundantly supplied with nutritious food, mulled ale, and every thing that was judged most likely to be conducive to his comfort and recovery.

The ulcer on his leg broke out during his confinement to bed, and was dressed daily by the surgeon; and though it at one time threatened mortification, yet was both in an improved and an improving state when he left the Asylum.

A trifling eruption broke out on his thighs, arms, and sides, in the second week of his illness, but it appeared to depend entirely on the state of his constitutional health, and had none of the characters of the itch.

He was kept as clean as possible in the deplorable condition in which he lay, but as his discharges were generally involuntary, it was absolutely impracticable to keep him in a state of complete cleanliness.

CHARLES BEST.

Nov. 5, 1813.

No. III.

MANDALL'S CASE.

Mrs. ELIZABETH MANDALL, sister to Mr. Robert Mandall, of Doncaster, but now of Tickhill, says, that to her own certain knowledge, her father received a letter from Dr. Best, when her brother Robert was in the Lunatic Asylum at York, telling him that her brother Robert had got his leg broken by accident, and that as he had given a great deal of trouble to Mr. Atkinson, he recommended him to send Mr. Atkinson a present. Upon this, Mr. Mandall consulted Mr. Branson, of Doncaster, who advised him to send a couple of pounds or guineas; he thought it would be enough, as he thought it was their duty at the Asylum to cure him. That old Mr. Mandall sent him two pounds or guineas, but she, Mrs. E. Mandall, has forgot which, though she saw the letter. That, on the 25th of August, to the best of her recollection, her father received a letter from Dr. Best, informing him that his son was dead; in consequence of this, he went over to York, accompanied by Mrs. Mandall, his daughter. That, when they were both present in the Asylum, Mrs. Mandall asked a man called James, how her brother came to get his leg broken; on which, he seemed surprised, and declared he had never any such thing; that he had nothing but a bruised ankle for a few days, from a kick of one of the other patients. That, presently afterward, a man came in of the name of Henry, to whom Mrs. M. put the same question, and who replied, with seeming sur-

prise, that he had no broken leg, but only a bruised ancle that confined him for a day or two. That, presently after this, Mr. Atkinson came in, (this was all in Mr. Atkinson's room) to whom Mrs. Mandall put the same question, and who directly answered the same thing, that he had no broken leg. Mrs. M. told Mr. Atkinson that Mr. M. had sent Dr. Best two pounds or guineas for curing his leg, for setting the broken bone, at which Mr. Atkinson smiled, but said nothing.

Mrs. M. further says, that her father was very much dissatisfied with the charges, particularly for attendance and wine. That he would not have paid them, but Mrs. Mandall persuaded him to do it. That James and Henry were the two men who constantly attended her brother, as they informed her. Mr. Mandall paid a guinea a week, Mrs. M. thinks, but she does not know from her own knowledge. Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson told Mrs. Mandall and her father, that it was usual to give gloves and wine at the funeral, and her father, in consequence, did give gloves and a gallon of white wine and a gallon of red, which was provided by Mr. Atkinson to the people in the house. Mrs. M. hereby declares the whole of the above to be true, and is ready to swear to the truth of it if necessary.

(Signed) ELIZABETH MANDALL.

Tickhill, Aug. 22, 1814.

Witness, G. HIGGINS.

Mr. Thomas Robinson Mandall, grandson to the elder Mr. Mandall, and nephew to the late Robert Mandall, who died in York Asylum. He remembers seeing a letter from Dr. Best, making a charge of five guineas for his own attendance, and he thinks there was a charge of two guineas for Mr. Atkinson. That he was at that time in the habit of answering Dr. Best's letters for his grandfather; he thinks he wrote the letter which inclosed the five guineas. When his grandfather came from York, he remembers very well his saying that his son's leg never had been broken. He understood his uncle was in the middle class of patients.

(Signed) THOS. R. MANDALL.

Sworn in my presence, this 22d day of

August, 1814.

G. HIGGINS.

Mrs. Mason, of Doncaster, sister to Mr. Robert Mandall, says, she has seen the letters which came from Dr. Best to her father respecting her brother, Robert Mandall; that she is positive there was a specific charge made by Dr. Best of five guineas for his extra attendance, and two guineas for Mr. Atkinson; and that she knows and is certain that her father sent

it. She says, she remembers reading the letter very well ; she remembers the word extra ; her little girl was ill at the time, and he brought it to her up stairs. She heard her father say, when he came home from the funeral, that both Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson had told him that his son Robert had never had a broken leg, and that they never had seen or received the two guineas. (Signed)

MARY MASON.

Sworn before me, this 22d day of
August, 1814.

G. HIGGINS.

Mr. Mason, of Doncaster, heard Mr. Mandall say he had paid Dr. Best's charge for himself and Mr. Atkinson, to the best of his recollection, five guineas and two guineas. That he came into possession of all the elder Mr. Mandall's papers, as solicitor for his executors. That he remembers a letter purporting to come from Dr. Best, and claiming those above-named charges for the cure of the broken leg, for his own and Mr. Atkinson's trouble and attendance. That he, after some time, destroyed those letters, not thinking them of any consequence, and wishing to efface from recollection all such unpleasant circumstances of his family. Mr. Mason married Mr. Mandall's daughter. He perfectly remembers Mr. Mandall telling him, after his return from York, that he had ascertained that his son's leg was never broken. (Signed)

THOS. MASON.

Sworn before me, this 22d day of
August, 1814.

G. HIGGINS.

N. B. All the deposing parties above are now alive, and ready to give evidence if called on ; and so it was stated by me at York.

No. IV.

E. WEST'S CASE.

SINCE I had the honour of giving my evidence to you, I have learnt that my conduct has been publicly censured for traducing the character of James Backhouse, an innocent man. I know nothing against him, except this case of Elizabeth West, and, surely, when the anonymous letters of recovered lunatics are admitted as evidence, it must be allowed that she is a competent witness as to the father of her child, for she was in sane mind when she fathered it, and has been so ever since. Her character, both before her derangement and since her recovery, irreproachable.

Upon what principle the governors not only appropriated the funds of the charity to maintain this child, but afterwards voted a sum of money to Backhouse for a piece of plate, as a reward for his uninterrupted good service, I cannot tell. I do not think the money was appropriated according to the intention of the donors, but yet I must say, I agree with the governors that it does not seem very unfair that the institution should maintain its own bastards. In the case of D. Exilby, the husband, who *had no access to his wife*, was obliged to maintain the child which was known, by the ocular demonstration of four or five persons, to be one of the children which Parkin, of Hull, had to patients in this well regulated house; and I believe that some of the persons, members of the House of Lords, who signed the order for the plate, would rather have had their hands cut off than have signed it, had they known the circumstance of the child.— This case seems to me to furnish many cogent reasons why the prayer of the governors of this house, to exempt it from visitation, should not be granted.

Extracts from the Town's Book at Louth.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|----|----|----|
| "Sept. 25th, 1797. The parish agree to maintain the child of which Elizabeth West is pregnant, upon James Backhouse paying 30 <i>l.</i> and all expences. | | | £. | s. | d. |
| "Feb. 8th, 1798. By cash of Mr. Phillips,* being the first payment from Backhouse | | | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| "April, 1799. Received on account of West's bastard child | | | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| "Feb. 2d, 1801. By cash received from Backhouse, of York, for West's child | | | 10 | 0 | 0 |

Extracts from the Books of the Asylum.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|----|---|---|
| "1797, Oct. 22d. James Backhouse's expences into Lincolnshire | | | 16 | 1 | 0 |
| "1799, Feb. 21st. Paid Mr. Thomas Phillips | | | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| "Sept. 9th. Mr. Thomas Phillips | | | 10 | 0 | 0 |

It appears by the parish books of Louth, that a man of the name of Robert Barton, a lunatic, was sent, about the 21st of August, 1797, to York, with an allowance of 8*s.* per week for his maintenance, by the parish of Louth; but he was refused admittance, the attendants giving as a reason that they would receive no more patients from Louth.

* He was town's clerk of Louth.

No. V.

MOAT's EVIDENCE IN VICKERS's CASE.

FRANCIS MOAT, of Fishlake, says, that he took William Vickers to the Asylum at York. He called during the time

Vickers was at the Asylum to see him, but was refused. He fetched him away, in consequence of a letter sent to Mr. Thos. Leach, the overseer, from Dr. Best, informing him that he might fetch Vickers away, as he could do no more for him. He saw and read this letter of Dr. Best's. He had no doubt that Vickers was almost starved for want of food, from the excessive greediness with which he took a bone and attempted to eat it, at the public-house, the White Horse, in Copper-gate, in York; and from his excessive weak and reduced state, he could not walk at first without help, but after he got plenty to eat, he could. He, this deponent, says, that he examined the wound in his leg, and he has no doubt that it was caused by an iron or some sort of shackle with which he had been fastened, and which had been permitted to sit into the flesh: he judges from the circular mark round the leg, where it had made a dent into the flesh. He also saw the marks on his back, and he has not the least doubt that they were the marks of lashes or stripes; they could not possibly have been any thing else. Deponent took him to Mr. Thompson's, of Escrit, to shew him to Mr. Thompson, supposing Mr. Thompson to be a governor, but he was not at home.—He heard a woman, called Deborah Thompson, in the Asylum, say, that she had been flogged or whipped.

FRANCIS MOAT.

Skelbow Grange, Sept. 28th, 1815.

No. VI.

LETTER FROM MR. HIGGINS TO THE GOVERNORS.

To the Governors of the York Lunatic Asylum.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

As the abuses, which are now not denied to have existed in the York Lunatic Asylum, will probably be laid before Parliament in the ensuing session, it is unnecessary to say much about them.

Let me, however, briefly remind you, that it appears from the reports of your Committee that large sums of money, arising from the admission of opulent patients, have not been applied, according to the original intention, to the relief of the poorer classes; and that the lunatic poor, who have been confided to the care of your officers and servants by the magistrates, have been neglected and abused. It does not, however, appear that any of the persons, who have thus abused your confidence or betrayed their trust, have yet been dismissed from their situations, or even censured for their misconduct.

Under these circumstances, I hope you will not fail to attend at the general meeting, which is fixed for Friday in the ensuing race week, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

I think it now both my right and my duty to call upon you to do justice to the institution and the public, and I feel confident, I shall not call in vain.

In the name of all those persons, whose violent deaths are so stated in your books, as to disguise the facts from you, I call for justice.*

In the name of *one hundred and forty-four*[†] patients, whose deaths have been concealed from the public and from you, I call for justice.

I call upon you to clear the house of every individual, who has neglected his duty or abused his authority.

I call upon you to cleanse the Augean Stable from top to bottom.—I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most obedient humble servant,
GODFREY HIGGINS.

Skellow Grange, Aug. 1814.

* The number of casualties in this house cannot be known; because, when a man's brains are dashed out, he is entered in the books, *died*; and when a patient has disappeared, and can never afterwards be heard of, he is entered, *removed*.

† See the printed Report of the Committee, page 13.

No. VII.

REPORT OF THE ASYLUM, AUGUST, 1815.

THE General Annual Court of Governors will be held at the Asylum, on Friday the 25th day of August, 1815, at eleven o'clock in the Forenoon.

STATE OF THE ASYLUM.

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| Patients admitted from the first establishment in Nov. 1777, to | | |
| July 1, 1813 | 2560 | |
| From 1st July, 1813, to 10th October, 1814, ditto | 75 | |
| | 2635 | |
| From Nov. 1777, to July 1, 1813, cured, improved, removed by their friends, and not accounted for (the proportions of each not ascertainable) | | |
| | 1996 | |
| From July 1, 1813, to October 10, 1814, discharged and removed, as above | 137 | 2133 |
| From Nov. 1777, to 1st July, 1813, died | 365 | |
| July 1, 1813, to October 10, 1804, died | 34 | 399 |
| Remaining in the Asylum, October 10, 1814 | | 103 |
| | | 2635 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Patients in the Asylum, Oct. 10, 1814 [*] | 103 |
| Ditto admitted to July 1, 1815 | 32 |

 135

From Oct. 10, 1814, to July 1, 1815,

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Discharged cured | 10 |
| ———— improved | 8 |
| Removed by their friends | 6 |
| Died | 3 |

 27

| | | | | |
|------------------|----|---------|-----|-----|
| Remain—Men | 63 | } | 108 | 108 |
| Women .. | 45 | | | |

JOSHUA MILLAR, Apothecary.

* The new officers and servants had not all entered on their duties before the 10th October, 1814; previous to which time, the number of patients in the Asylum cannot be precisely ascertained.

 No. VIII.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL COURT, AUG. 1815.

At an Annual Court of Governors of the York Lunatic Asylum, held at the Asylum, on Friday the 25th day of August, 1815,

Earl FITZWILLIAM in the Chair;

Resolved unanimously,

That this Court feels, with the highest degree of satisfaction, the very great improvement which has taken place in every department of this institution, since the General Meeting in August last, by which they have no doubt, that in point of humane treatment of the patients, and the general order and cleanliness of the house, the York Lunatic Asylum is scarcely excelled by any similar institution in the kingdom, and this Court returns thanks to the committees, visiting governors and ladies, for the attention to the duties which they have so humanely undertaken, and so judiciously and zealously performed.

This Court, contemplating the great improvements made in the state of the house, feels a pleasure in acknowledging its great obligation to GODFREY HIGGINS, Esq. to whose zeal and perseverance the origin of these improvements must, in a great measure, be ascribed.

Resolved,

That the resolutions passed this day be printed in each of the York newspapers.

WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM.

The chair being taken by the Rev. Robert Croft,

Resolved unanimously,

That the cordial thanks of this meeting be given to the Right Hon. Earl Fitzwilliam, for his very able and patient attention to the business of the day.

No. IX.

LETTER FROM THE REV. J. GRAHAM AND MR. J. GRAY.

SIR,

York, Nov. 4, 1815.

IN answer to your's of the 2d inst. we have to acquaint you, that, on the 26th of January, 1814, the Committee wished for an account of the average numbers and classes of the patients, to be prepared by us against their next meeting on the 28th. The steward was desired to send us his account books for the four quarters of the year 1813; and four quarterly books were in consequence sent. Three of these were accounts for the *second*, third, and fourth quarters of the year, and they tallied with the steward's accounts with the governors. The fourth book (sent by mistake instead of that for the first quarter of the year) was *another* account for the *second* quarter. This book shewed the steward's actual receipts, which exceeded the sums he had given credit for; and we inferred that the physician received the difference.—At the next meeting of the Committee, 28th of January, we made our statement of the classes of the patients, and of the participation of the physician in their payments, (see p. 48 of the printed report.)

Previous to that day, the Committee had made no inquiry of Dr. Best as to his emoluments, nor had he made any disclosure to them; but, on our statement being inspected, Dr. Best was asked several questions, and he gave the explanation stated in page 49 of the printed report.—We remain, Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

J. GRAHAM,
J. GRAY.

No. X.

EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE BAD BREAD.

MRS. BECKWITH says, she was at the Asylum upon the examination into the case of Martha Kyd: she was ordered some refreshment: the servants of the Asylum brought her some bread and cheese and ale. The bread they brought her was the worst in quality she ever saw in her life. She brought some of

it away with her, and gave it to several persons, amongst the rest to Miss Johnson and Mr. Hurst. Her

MARGT. \nearrow BECKWITH.

Mark.

I declare I was present, and the bread was as above described.

R. RIDEAL.

Witness, MICHAEL MITTON, Mayor.

I hereby certify, that the bread given to me by Mrs. Beckwith, of the workhouse at Pontefract, and which she informed me was given to her to eat when she was attending at the Asylum at York, as a witness in the case of Martha Kyd, was the very worst in quality, according to my opinion, of any I ever saw.

WILLIAM POPPLEWELL.

Doncaster, April 5, 1814.

No. XI.

CASES.

ELIZABETH BURTON was in the Asylum about twelve months. She was, on her admission, put into a cell after being stripped naked, where she remained a day and two nights, and was never visited the whole time. She afterwards became low spirited; and when in that situation she displeased the keeper, she was struck on the head with a key, which made the blood run down: clothes were carried for her by her sister, which were never given to her.*

Margaret Beaumont was in a low spirited state of mind. During the two last years of her confinement, she did the work of a servant. Her friends were not permitted to see her. She was often ill treated; once, in particular, she was struck with great violence with a large key. She was also once struck with a poker across her back, and, at another time, with the mangle roller, because she was fretting. She washed her clothes in the dark, and carried them in her pocket till she had an opportunity of drying them. They once put a woman into her bed, named Betty Dale, who was covered with lice: she would not sleep with her, but sat up all night. This woman always kept herself clean, except when they kept her locked up.†

Edward Hanson, master manufacturer, came to the Asylum the 1st of May, 1811: after two or three weeks, was put naked into one of the cells, with nothing but a coverlet and straw: he

* She is now perfectly recovered.

† After Margaret Beaumont's deposition, follow the certificates of several respectable persons of her good character. The key seems to have been very useful. Martha Kyd's head was much beaten with a key.

was there about a week. Sometimes another patient was put in with him. His food was in scanty quantities. He did the necessary business of nature in a corner of the cell, which remained all the time he was in the cell. He was struck on the breast by two keepers for having struck another patient in the yard: he never was so beaten in his life. Dr. Best never visited him in his cells. When in the cells, as well as out, he had both emetics and purgatives given him: he complained to his brother of his ill treatment, who, in consequence, took him out, and sent him to Newton Heath, near Manchester, where he was well treated. He is now perfectly recovered, and carries on his usual business.*

Mary Booth. When first put into the Asylum, had all her clothes taken from her, and in their place, had a bed-gown, a shift, an under petticoat, and cap, given to her. She was put into a room with about eighteen other women patients, many of them with less clothes than herself. She says that they brought a plate of meat for each patient, and left them to eat it; that the other patients would frequently eat her dinner as well as their own; that they frequently fought and hurt each other severely; that she was frequently turned out at eight o'clock, and remained all the day in the cold and rain dressed as above described. Some time after her husband complained of her treatment, she was removed into a room with a better class of patients. In this better room, she saw Sally and Hannah throw a woman down, (she thinks of the name of Smith) and force salad into her mouth with an iron spoon. A keeper of the name of Henry, who cut up the meat in this room, then dragged her out, and turned up her clothes and flogged her severely. Sally and Hannah stood by laughing. At the time she (Mary Booth) saw this, she did the work as a servant, and left the Asylum a few weeks afterwards.

George Pickering was sent to the Asylum in October, in a clean state: he stayed seven weeks. He returned in a most filthy state: his flannel shirt he went in had never been washed: his head and clothes actually swarmed with lice: his body was blistered with vermin.†

Dorothy Exilby's case is too indecent for insertion. Her son, born three months after she came from the Asylum, by Parkin, of Hull, is now alive. She and her husband, William Exilby, are both living, and ready to give evidence whenever called on. She was admitted 8th July, 1801, and discharged, cured, 20th

* This gentleman swore to the truth of the above in my presence.—G. H.

† He is dead; but his daughter, and the man who went with him, and a respectable surgeon, are ready to verify the facts as here stated.

February, 1802. William Exilby has brought up Parkin's son, and never had any allowance for him.*

The following is an extract from the letter of a man of rank to his solicitors, after the statute of lunacy had been superseded.

I say, I was most arbitrarily confined in the York medical inquisition, managed by ———, now no more, and the gang of Myrmidons, who are allowed to commit even murder with impunity, as no proof can be had, except proof that would be considered madness in any of the people under confinement, and who would not be heard in evidence against any doctor's keepers. Another thing is, that a coroner's inquest is seldom or ever called to inspect the bodies after they are fortunately released by death from the most shocking cruelty of doctors and their keepers, and the most dangerous tyranny ever invented by the devil, doctors, or men: so, before you again apply for a commission of lunacy against any individual, under the heaviest of all human afflictions, if you are not destitute of every humane feeling for the sufferings of your fellow creatures,—it behoves you to consider what the consequences are of obtaining such statutes, and the tyranny of such laws as those of lunacy.

* From this it should seem, as if the governors did not consider themselves bound to maintain the bastards of the patients, only those of the keepers. App. No. IV.

THE END.









